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TUNIS AND AFTER

THE Eighth Army has made a great forward bound, compelling the Axis forces to abandon the whole of the long strip of coastal plain which they held between Enfidaville in the North and the Mareth Line in the South. They have now withdrawn behind a perimeter, about 150 miles long, covering Bizerta, the plain round Tunis and the Cap Bon peninsula.

This is the end of a definite phase in the Battle of Tunisia. That hopes of even more decisive victory have been disappointed is due to Rommel's skill and mobility. He seems to have lost over 30,000 prisoners (mostly Italians) and been compelled to abandon large numbers of tanks, guns and motor vehicles. Yet the bulk of the Africa Korps got away. The chance of cutting the enemy off at Kairouan or Sousse was lost through the failure of the First Army's thrust eastward from Fondouk to reach Kairouan in time. This failure, by the admission of American correspondents on the spot, was in large measure due to the inability of a still insufficiently trained American infantry formation, which was co-operating with the First Army, to clear the enemy quickly enough from mined ground over which the British armour had to pass.

The next stage in the campaign may be difficult. The Axis forces, which hold the Tunisian "top," are estimated to number nearly 150,000 Germans (mainly crack troops) and some 50,000 Italians. Rommel will not give up his Tunisian position without a bitter struggle. His supplies may in time become difficult, and what will be the fate of the large civilian population of Tunis we can only conjecture. But if Rommel follows the example of General Paulus outside Stalingrad and fights to the last shot, he may still succeed in delaying the Allied invasion of the Continent for a considerable and critical period.

The promised invasion of Europe is not only military; it is also political and psychological. We must arrive as liberators, eager to offer aid to all who hate Fascism and strive for freedom. They belong to many groups and profess several political creeds; they include the incredibly brave whose lives during these last three years have been devoted to resistance against staggering odds; they range all the way to those who would be on the side of liberty if they could, but who have sunk into apathy, despairing, under the weight of Nazi brutality and propaganda, of ever again seeing a world in which men eat their fill and speak their minds without fear. The proportion of these groups, the creeds they profess and the means required to give them new life and practical coherence, vary from country to country. In each case a political analysis of the psychological territory to be invaded is as important as a military appreciation. Wise political warfare may multiply our friends and rouse up new enemies against the Nazis; a narrow military outlook might turn our friends into neutrals and force us to the slow and bloody process of reducing by fire and bomb a countryside which sees us as gladiators rather than as liberators.

How complex and important the political basis of invasion may be the Allies have learnt in North Africa. The French confusion is still unresolved. Neither General Giraud or General de Gaulle is prepared to subordinate himself to the other. The solution of a temporary administration of French Colonial Governors, discussed between Giraud and Catroux, is not, we gather, satisfactory to de Gaulle, who wants a provisional government which could speak for the forty million Frenchmen in Europe as well as the inhabitants of the French Empire. Giraud has a larger French army than de Gaulle and claims the right to be French military Commander-in-Chief. He is emphatic that no provisional government can be formed with any title to represent France. He suggests a formula for choosing a French government through the machinery of the old Conservative *Conseils Generaux*, after an undefined period of military administration. It may be urged that no military expedition could be purely military; the invading force, whatever Giraud's own desires, might easily be used by the Peyrouton-Flandin political group which, in spite of recent purges, is still powerful in North Africa. The supporters of de Gaulle further urge that their general has very large popular forces behind him inside France and that his Committee is entitled to interim recognition as a provisional government of both France and the French Empire. If it is argued that he himself has dangerously personal ambitions, the retort comes that the *Gaullist* movement in France does not depend on his personality; that once released it will develop in its own way; and that the strong forces both on the Left and on the Right which it represents do constitute a genuine fusion of the elements of popular resistance and would themselves form the best basis for a future French democracy.

Awkward though the British may find General de Gaulle, we believe that it would be a mistake to exclude him from any provisional administration; he is a symbol and a rallying ground for the popular forces in France. It should be within our power to purge the de Gaulle Staff of Cagoulards and other pro-Fascist elements.

When we consider other countries which our armies hope to liberate, it will be of the utmost importance to begin by allying ourselves with the genuinely democratic forces. Recent events amongst the Greek forces of resistance have shown how overwhelming is the feeling against dictatorship and all elements, including the monarchists, that have been associated with it. In Yugo-Slavia the pretence that General Mihailovitch could be relied upon has now been almost abandoned. The partisans, bravely resisting determined Axis efforts to destroy them, are the friends of the United Nations and the sooner that this is publicly recognised, the better for the United Nations. Italy, the stepping stone away from Tunis, is one of the most interesting and perhaps the most immediate problem. To get Italy out of the war with as little blood and destruction as possible and with the largest measure of goodwill among common people, who have never wished for war and have long detested the Fascist regime, would be an immense triumph. The repercussions all over the Continent would be incalculable. To have to conquer Italy by reducing to ashes towns that embody the heart of European culture, to have to fight the common people whom we have promised to liberate from Fascism, would be a disaster.

We need a realistic appreciation of the forces at work. The State Department has already recognised an exiled Italian Legion with Count

Sforza at its head. All possible use should be made too of the remains of the *Partito Popolare*, which rested on the sympathies of many parish priests, and of the various Liberal and Leftist underground movements in Italy which it should be our aim to harmonise. These resistance parties, however, cannot of themselves do anything in a country which has been for twenty years under Fascism. The key is the army, which can still fight bravely, as some units of it did in North Africa, but which is known to have no heart in the war and to have many leaders who are opposed to the existing Fascist order. We have no doubt that there are officers who could be induced to turn against Fascism provided they were sure of an honourable and tolerable future for their country. War-weariness and apathy and the strength of feeling against Germany are the strongest cards in our hands. If it is clear to the Italians that the Germans will not win the war and that the Allies will bring with them food, a not humiliating peace, and the prospect of freedom, we may find little resistance if we proceed to occupy the Italian peninsula. Let us remember that this hopeful prospect depends on our capacity to offer an escape clause to the Italians. If we offer no reason for hope, the very apathy to which Mussolini has reduced his people might be turned to a fight of desperation—which is clearly what Hitler is hoping will occur. Now that we are powerful and our victory is expected, the chance of political warfare designed to bring peace as well as victory is at hand. Nowhere is its careful application more important than in Italy.

Financing the War

This year's Budget is a logical, and on the whole commendable continuance of the Treasury's "pincer-attack" on price-inflation. That is, while relative stability in the supply and price of essentials is secured by a combination of rationing, "utility" manufacture and subsidies, a serious effort is again made by increased taxation to prevent labour being diverted to non-essential production by the increase in spendable incomes which arises from the State's war-expenditure. Excluding Lend-Lease and similar arrangements, Sir Kingsley Wood put 1943–44 expenditure at £5.7 milliards, against a comparable figure of £5.4 milliards expended last year. His existing taxes, he estimated, would raise £2.8 milliards—an increase of £210 millions. Reckoning on a cash inflow of £600 millions from oversea "disinvestment" and £2.2 milliards from domestic borrowing, he was faced with an uncovered, and directly inflationary gap of £100 millions. This he proposes to bridge with fresh revenue from higher duties on alcohol and tobacco, increased Purchase Tax on "luxuries" and dearer charges for telegrams, trunk and telephone calls. Provided that the Treasury has not underestimated expenditure—a point open to doubt—there is little in this with which to quarrel. Since the motive for increased telegraph and telephone charges is to economise Post Office labour, it is arguable that, for the same reason, a deterrent tax ought to be imposed on travel, advertising and a number of similar services which make a drain on man-power. Equally it might be held that luxury products should be eliminated instead of continuing to be available to all who can pay more for them. With these reservations, it will be generally agreed that the Budget is realistic and reasonably just. Consumption of beer, spirits and tobacco has proved impervious to increased duties; and, though the hard cases of the soldier and pensioner will find their advocates, the Treasury has probably chosen the most practicable way in a capitalist society of "skimming off" purchasing power which would otherwise be devoted to buying uncontrolled goods.

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Russia Survives

The first reliable picture of life in occupied Russia, with its vast population of 73 millions, appears in a recent number of the *New Republic*. It has been compiled from the "White" Russian newspaper, *Novoye Slovo*, published in Berlin, and carries us up to October, 1942. Partly by planned evacuation, partly by flight, partly by the total extermination of the Jews, the population of the towns had been reduced to half or less. With rare exceptions the Nazis had failed to restore the bigger industrial units to working order. The valuable manganese mines of Nikopol had as yet yielded no ore. Of the sugar factories less than half were expected to be soon working again, and the sowing plan for the Ukraine provided for a reduction of the beet crops by half. It is clear that the wheat crop must have been equally disappointing, for we are told that the wealth of the black earth is a legend and that the responsibility for feeding the Reich still rests on the shoulders of the German peasant. The Nazis had promised the restoration of the individual private ownership of land. Nothing of the kind has happened. The fields are still cultivated and reaped by communal work. At the most the biggest collective farms have been broken into rather smaller units. It is also clear that such small industries as do still function remain under a collective economy. The conclusion seems to be that the Communist way of life was solidly established. Only in a few exceptional cases were local leaders ready for servile collaboration with the invaders. Normally the intellectuals took the lead and acted in a spirit of loyalty to the Soviet idea. Though the people are hungry they retain their self-respect, and a White journalist is even driven to admire "the high cultural standards of the masses."

American Labour and "Little Steel"

President Roosevelt's refusal to make any concession either to the farming interests which are pressing for a more favourable ratio of agricultural to other prices, or to the Labour organisations which are demanding a modification of the "little steel" formula restricting wage-increases, have been followed by a violent outburst from Mr. John L. Lewis. Mr. Lewis, whose United Mine Workers' Association appears to have come no nearer to agreement with the colliery owners, denounced in one and the same breath the President, the profiteers, the American Federation of Labour, and the Congress of Industrial Organisations. The burden of his complaint is that the Administration is allowing profits to soar practically without let or hindrance, whereas it is keeping farmers and workers at a "serf" level, and that the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. are both in effect abetting the President by taking his refusal lying down. A certain amount of inflation, Mr. Lewis argues, is to be expected in wartime; and, violently as he abuses the profiteers, he seems to be intent rather on urging the farmers and workers to imitate them than in getting profits limited or taxed more drastically away. The danger underlying this sort of talk is that there is undoubted substance in Mr. Lewis's charges of profiteering; for American big business is having the time of its life and little has been done so far to curb expenditure on the part of the rich. Consequently, the Lewis type of argument is likely to have a good deal of appeal, not only to his own miners, but to the rank and file of the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. as well. The moral, of course, is not that wages should be allowed to rip, but that profit-making and luxurious spending should be better restrained. But will Congress allow the Administration to do these things? Hardly, in its present anti-Roosevelt mood: yet, if it will not, labour unrest is bound to increase and such demagogues as Mr. Lewis will be given every chance to sabotage the war effort. It is an awkward predicament for Mr. Roosevelt, who can hardly cling to his "little steel" formula for long unless he can get adequate power to hold down prices and to check profiteering.

Production Committees

The Amalgamated Engineering Union has issued a report on the working of Joint Production Committees. It is made plain that there are still a good many big factories in which no committees have been set up, and that in a proportion of the factories in which they have been set up there has been very little attempt to take them seriously. More than ten per cent. of the existing committees do not appear in fact to deal at all with matters of production—for which they were set up; and in a good many cases the managements are still trying to use the committees for dealing with absenteeism, though this has been explicitly declared to lie outside their terms of reference. There is also a tendency to deal with questions of piecework, though all wage-issues are supposed to be excluded from the committees' scope. Despite these and other defects, the opinion seems to be that the Production Committees have done excellent work when a real attempt has been made to use them for the purposes for which they were meant. It is not very surprising that a new form of organisation which accords to the workers' representatives a recognised right to discuss questions falling within the sphere of management should encounter much hostility on the part of old-fashioned employers, managers, and, last but not least, workshop foremen. The A.E.U. report regards it as a severe limitation on the committees' powers that they cannot remove incompetent staff employees, and suggests that the system will not work really well until "the workpeople reach entirely new levels of responsibility." It also comments sadly that the past six months have shown little improvement over the position which existed nearer the beginning of the system, and holds that there is "a hard core of defects which no efforts in the workshops have shifted." The blame for this is thrown partly on the absence of an effective central production plan, and it is urged that the putting into force of such a plan would soon lead to regional and local decentralisation and so give the Production Committees a better chance.

The Budget in the House *(by a Parliamentary Correspondent)*

The standard of humour is not always high in the House, which seizes any suitable opportunity of relief especially in a Budget speech of two and a half hours. All eyes were thus cast meaningly at the Prime Minister when the increased duties on tobacco were announced. Sympathetic applause greeted Churchill's response in waving a non-existent cigar. In the course of a long statement about allowances for repairs and renewals which were to be made at the end of hostilities Kingsley Wood admitted that he had fully consulted "with representatives of the principal industrial and commercial bodies." Even the Tories laughingly approved the *sotto voce* "you would" which came emphatically from George Griffiths.

Few Budgets can have been opened to a smaller House, which did not even fill for the last half-hour of the Chancellor's speech when tax changes were announced. On this occasion the Chancellor appeared to have a greater mastery over his brief than in most past Budget speeches. A welcome was given to his account of the help rendered our allies under Lend-Lease. This was much larger than had been thought. M.P.s particularly approved of the income tax concessions for housekeepers as most of their recent correspondence on tax questions has concerned this grievance. The tax increases had been expected but there was some surprise in the lobbies that the compulsory savings scheme had not been extended. But the largest Budget in British history stimulated little controversy or interest.

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ALMIGHTY DOLLAR

In last week's preliminary review of the Keynes Plan we promised to explore the subject more fully, and in particular to comment further on the relation between the plan and the proposals issued simultaneously by the United States Treasury. Neither scheme is to be regarded as representing an official Government view, and in both it is stated explicitly that they are issued only as furnishing material for further discussion. It is, however, evident that the two plans would not have been issued at the same moment, without any reconciliation between them, had there not been a real divergence of views that could not be easily bridged. Superficially, the two are alike; fundamentally, they are quite different.

The first question that arises is whether it is wise, at this stage, to attempt any currency agreement at all. In framing an international economic policy for the post-war world, is the monetary aspect the right one to begin on? Some people will argue that it is, on the ground that if the world can introduce real internationalism into its monetary arrangements, it will be a great deal easier to face the problems of world trade and investment in a spirit of practical economic co-operation. This argument is seductive, but it rests on the assumption that it is possible to work out a satisfactory monetary framework without knowing what real content of trade and investment is to be put into it, and that the processes of trade and investment can then be adjusted to the monetary framework, rather than *vice versa*. Lord Keynes, both in the introductory sections of his draft and in the body of his scheme, shows himself aware of this aspect of the problem; but the American draft shows not the smallest awareness of it. Indeed, the American Plan, even if it contains good secondary features, is in the main neither more nor less than a putting back of the world into the strait jacket of the gold standard.

Of course, the fundamental fact about any international monetary plan is that it can deal only with the tokens of exchange and not with the real things exchanged by means of these tokens. If we reflect for a moment on the fact that some countries possess foreign investments—or rather their nationals do—whereas other countries are in balance in debt, the essential truth is that nations can afford to purchase the goods and services of other nations only to the extent to which they can either pay for them with their own goods and services or persuade someone to lend them, at long or short term, the means of paying. If a country wants to acquire more foreign goods and services than it can pay for in one or other of these ways, it can do so only to the extent to which it can contrive to turn some of its suppliers into involuntary creditors, by paying them, for example, in blocked currency of its own, or by not paying them at all. A country which gets into an unbalanced position and has foreign investments can carry on by selling off its marketable securities as long as the supply of these holds out; a country which lacks such assets can only block or default or endeavour to redress the situation by lowering the external value of its currency in the hope of thereby readjusting its balance of payments.

These are elementary truths, of which the world had plenty of direct experience during the period between the wars. The American scheme envisages that we should face the post-war situation, in which unbalanced balances of payments are certain for some time to be widespread among the nations, by laying down, first and foremost, that the currencies of all virtuous countries are to be pegged firmly to gold, and that their values in gold are to be thereafter alterable only by the common consent of the great majority of Governments represented in the management of the proposed Stabilisation Fund. In effect, what this means is, first, that all currencies are to be pegged firmly to the American dollar, and, secondly, that the vast, unwanted store of gold in the United States is to be prevented from turning bad on its owners by being given a new lease of life as the basis of the international monetary system. This may look very nice to the Americans, whose main economic problems are in the last resort internal, and who would like the rest of the world to take the burden of gold stocks off their shoulders. It will hardly look so nice to anyone else.

If we do allow this inflexible gold standard to be thrust on the world in advance of any solution of its basic economic problems, what is likely to happen? Everyone knows that the real problem of world economics is that the world wants and needs to buy from the United States very much more than the United States have so far shown itself at all prepared to receive back in the rest of the world's goods, and that, as long as the American tariff thus restricts buying, there can be no balance in world economic affairs unless either the Americans are prepared to invest abroad continuously on a very large scale, or other countries go without the American goods they need (and could pay for in goods) and do their best to find substitutes by trading among themselves, leaving the Americans to a self-imposed economic isolationism. The real problem that has to be solved is not the monetary problem, but that of getting the Americans to see, as the wiser among them know perfectly well, that they cannot have everything both ways. America's creditor position promises to reproduce on a much vaster scale the dilemma of the 1920's—how to exact reparations without accepting goods in payment.

If, without any solution of this problem, the nations all go back to gold, what will happen? What will happen is that they will not be able to stay on gold. The gold will silt up again in the United States, and the stabilisation of currencies will break down just as it broke down between the wars. While it is in process of breaking down, countries will find the gold standard preventing them from following the full employment policies on which the hope of a rising standard of life depends, and, under other clauses of the American plan, they will find themselves forbidden to do nearly all the things they will be driven to do in measures of self-preservation. They will not be allowed to control their provision of foreign exchange, or to enter into mutual (the Americans would say "discriminative") trading arrangements. The strait jacket will hold them fast, until they strip it off and throw it away—and then where shall we all be? Back in the old confusion of the inter-war period, back at the old game of beggar-my-neighbour, back at *autarkie* and economic nationalism, and pretty soon, probably, back at war.

Not that bilateralism and discrimination and all the rest of the "national economy" bag of tricks are good—far from it. They are bad, but they cannot be done away with by forcing the world back to a rigid gold system which has been proved already not to work. By contrast, the Keynes Plan is a model of realism. It keeps gold as the basis of the proposed international currency unit —bancor—but it does not attempt to fix a hard-and-fast ratio of exchange between bancor and any national currency. It leaves room for movement, in the hope that elasticity will enable an international system to work, and thus save the world from the plunge back into a chaos of nationalist *sauve qui peut* expedients. The Keynes Plan makes no pretence of dealing with the tangle that is bound to exist on the immediate morrow of the war. It recognises that special, short-run measures will be necessary for coping with that group of problems. What it does is to hold out the prospect of a new monetary order which can be introduced gradually and will offer the prospect of enough flexibility not to break under the first serious strain that is placed upon it. Moreover, the Keynes Plan has the supreme merit of being reasonably experimental in its initial conception. It begins by putting each country into credit, by giving to each an available supply of international purchasing power. It is, in this respect, the logical and necessary monetary accompaniment to national policies of full employment in each of the participating countries.

It is a great merit of the Keynes Plan that, much more strongly than its American counterpart, it recognises that creditors, equally with debtors, have obligations. Indeed, creditors have more obligations than debtors, for they can more easily honour them by accepting their debtors' goods. Even the Keynes Plan walks gingerly here, but it does walk.

To say this is not to suggest that Lord Keynes has solved the world's economic dilemma. He has not; it cannot be solved in monetary terms. What he has done is to propose a monetary mechanism that would probably work if the leading countries—above all, the United States, which hold the keys—were prepared sensibly to order their real economic relations. In our view, it would have been greatly preferable to begin the discussion of international economic policies at the other end—with trade and investment rather than money as the theme. But it may be that the attitude of the Americans made this impossible and that we were compelled to begin with talking about the monetary feature whether we liked it or not. What we must not do on any account is to pledge ourselves to an inflexible monetary arrangement before we have received assurances of an international policy of trade and investment that will give such a system the chance to work—*if even then*. In our view, an inflexible money system would be wrong in any event, but it might be worth talking about if, in return for accepting some approximation to it, we could secure a guarantee of common sense in handling the real problems of trade and investment.

We shall no doubt be told that it is unwise just now to tell plain truths to the Americans, who are sensitive about such matters as these, and that it would be wiser to keep mum about the difficulties that are certain to arise in any attempt to humanise American and European commercial policies. We do not agree. The sooner these difficulties are faced and argued out the better, for faced they must be before there can be any real planning for the post-war world. The Americans must be persuaded to understand that, though we like bilateralism and discrimination no better than they do, we must live and shall be forced to resort to them if the world's great creditor refuses to trade on reasonable mutual terms. For, let us say again, monetary agreements cannot solve real economic problems; they can only make them easier or harder to solve, and the wisest course, if the agreement that would make them easier is not acceptable, is to tackle the real economic issues directly and to come back to the problem of money later on.

FOREIGN SERVICE

Mr. Eden is reforming the Foreign Service. The idea is almost sacrilegious. None of our institutions, hardly even the Monarchy, possess a tradition so venerable. About the turn of the century, as a very young man, on my return from an instructive and adventurous stay in Crete and Turkey, I had the coveted experience of penetrating the inner citadel of the Foreign Office for a little less than an hour. The Permanent Under-Secretary who received me was a kindly old gentleman of the mid-Victorian period, with a fringe of white hair under his chin in the style of that day. He had occasion to write a note of introduction for me. He did it with his own hand, using a quill pen, and dried the ink on it by scattering sand over it from a sort of pepper-box. I felt some disappointment when I found that he had not written it in Latin.

This ancient institution adapted itself very slowly to the modern world. Journalists were not always treated with the courtesy I met with at this first encounter. I recall a very different experience in 1907 at the Hague during the Second Peace Conference. Lord Courtney had given me a warm personal letter of introduction to the head of the British delegation, whom I will call Sir XYZ. I wrote asking for an appointment for I wanted to hear what the

British delegation was trying to achieve behind the scenes in the secret sittings of the Conference. After a week's delay, a splendid uniformed messenger brought me a note bidding me call on the great man next morning. On the doorstep of the embassy, somewhat to my surprise, I met my old friend, H. W. Nevinson, and another colleague, Mr. Maxwell, a journalist well known in his day. Nevinson was the subtlest master of English prose and one of the noblest personalities of his generation. We three were kept waiting a quarter of an hour in the vast reception room of the Embassy. And then at the far end appeared the solemn, elderly figure of Sir XYZ. He advanced two or three paces, stopped at a distance of several yards from us, made a stiff little bow and said, "Gentlemen, I have nothing to say to reporters. Good morning." He then turned on his heel and left the room. A magnificent footman showed us out.

This was, even at that date, unusual behaviour. But British embassies were rarely helpful to journalists. I remember my desperation during the exciting crisis in Belgrade, after the murder of King Alexander and Queen Draga by a band of rebel officers. The British Minister would not say a word, but he asked me to play golf with him. The French Minister would not say a word, but he asked me to lunch. Finally, I called on the Russians—it was in Tsarist days—and the chargé d'affaires spent a good two hours in giving me a minute and graphic account of everything that had happened. I felt pretty sure that he had been a guilty party to the conspiracy, but I found his story as useful as it was vivid. The British rule of silence worked very badly. A journalist had to fish where he could and often I had to do my angling in German streams and Russian ponds.

But that was long ago. For many a year past the Foreign Office has organised its dealings with the press pretty thoroughly. It has lost its fears and learned only too well the arts of management. It has at last dawned on it that reporters are the most discreet of men. And now we are to have a reformed service. It is good that the staff of the Foreign Office, the diplomatic and consular corps are to be brigaded in a single Foreign Service. The new rules should open its doors wider than before to young men who come from schools less exclusive than Eton and Harrow. A welcome should go to the plan for giving graduates who enter between the ages of 21 and 23 some professional education, partly abroad and partly at home in economics as well as in languages. In this way a young man may acquire a modern outlook and become curious about the working of men's minds beyond the ramparts of this traditional island. But just how far and how deep down will these young men be encouraged to explore when they go abroad? A young man sent, let us say, to Paris, Moscow or Prague may study there in the university, which for some time would be useful. But for my part I would like to send him to work for a time in a French factory or vineyard, or in a Czech mine, or to join the crew of a river boat on the Volga. In the new post-war world the diplomatist who understands a democratic nation and knows how to handle it will not discover it in drawing-rooms or even predominantly in universities.

Whether we shall ever get a Foreign Service composed of men who can feel at home among all classes in the modern world will depend largely on the boards which interview candidates, admit them to the Service and afterwards promote them. It seems that at every stage these boards will be composed exclusively of civil servants and largely of senior members of the Foreign Service. If the intention is to preserve its old traditions, its prejudices, its ultra-conservative outlook and social exclusiveness unchanged, this is the ideal way to ensure it. These senior officials will choose only young men who conform to the rigid standards of their own younger days and they will promote those who conform to perfection. Under such direction the reformed Service will never quit the ancient ruts. These boards should include outsiders, even rank outsiders, who will scrutinise candidates and records with the eyes of the profane crowd—perhaps a "reporter" who has worked abroad, perhaps a schoolmaster, certainly a man of business, and assuredly someone from the Labour movement. Until this is done there will be no break with tradition.

Everyone realises that the technique of diplomacy has been transformed in the last half-century. The days are long since over when the ambassador, sometimes a great personality, acted boldly on his own initiative, hampered only by written instructions which might be already out of date when they reached him by courier. The telephone and aeroplane have changed all that. To-day, for any business of the first importance, Mr. Churchill or Mr. Eden flies to Washington, and even Mr. Molotov is relatively mobile. Much current business must be negotiated between experts.

Does this mean that embassies will lose their importance in the future? Far from it, if their new function is grasped. Mr. Eden's White Paper stuck to the traditional conception when it said that

> "the functions of the Diplomatic Service . . . are broadly . . . to represent His Majesty's Government in foreign countries and to be their channel of communication with foreign governments."

That function, steadily dwindling in importance, cannot be ignored; but will much of it remain if the major questions that hinge on power are transferred to a World Authority or even to Mr. Churchill's Continental Councils? The time is coming when we should regard an embassy primarily as a social centre, where representatives of all the activities of two nations are helped to get into touch. Already the consuls do this for the traders of the two countries. There is contact between the embassy staff and the press. But should we not go much farther afield? For a time, thanks to Mr. Lloyd George, a Labour attaché, himself drawn from the British Labour movement was placed on the staff of two or three embassies. Someone at the Paris Embassy, for example, should make it his business to get to know the French educational world. We need a scientific section to organise the contacts of research workers in many fields. In a peasant country like Jugoslavia or Bulgaria, it would be helpful and even indispensable to have at least one man on the staff who came from a farm. The less we consider kings (if any survive) in the Balkans, and the more respectfully we deal with peasants, the greater in the future will be our influence. There should also be a woman in every embassy to make contact with women's movements and organisations. Diplomacy, in short, must be conceived as a service of liaison not merely between governments but between peoples. For this the reforms make no provision save in the field of trade. Should we not provide for the inclusion in the Foreign Service of men and women specially qualified to organise all such contacts? A Selection Board should look for them, for example, among journalists, broadcasters, trade unionists, and at the universities or Chatham House, and invite the ablest of them to enter the Foreign Service.

But we may have to conceive the Foreign Service in terms very much broader than those of this White Paper. Our relations with foreign peoples depend even more upon our merchants, bankers, engineers, shippers and journalists who live and work abroad, than on the qualities of our professional diplomatists. If these men are arrogant, insular, poor linguists and unsuitably educated, all our relations with other peoples will suffer, as in the past they have suffered, notably in Asia. It is generally realised that a hard struggle lies before us after the war, if we are to recover and retain our full share of the world's trade. Much can be done through progress on the technical side, by financial backing and organised marketing. But dare we neglect the human side of all this effort—the personal impression which Englishmen abroad make on the peoples among whom they live and travel?

The White Paper begins to take an interest in the education of candidates for the Foreign Service only after they have passed through a university at the age of 21 to 23. To my thinking we should start very much earlier, round about 15, to give boys and girls who may be active abroad, whether as traders, shippers, bankers, journalists, consuls or diplomatists, some education that will fit them for foreign service, conceived in this wider sense. I mean much more than some specialisation on languages, the history of other peoples and similar studies. They should be sent abroad in large numbers in the formative years between 15 and 21, to schools or colleges in their future scene of activity, where they will win friends and grasp the mental outlook of distant peoples far more readily than they are likely to do if they go out untrained in later life. I mean, to put the suggestion concretely, that fifty boys or young men should be sent every year to Indian schools or colleges, and as many to China, there to study and play and talk on equal terms with Indian or Chinese youngsters of their own age. If we had done this a generation ago our relationship with these Eastern peoples would have been happier than it is to-day. There is a yawning gap in our whole system of education. A seafaring and trading people ought to devise a much more ambitious training for foreign service than we have ever yet imagined. Our present methods belong to the days of sand and quill pens.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

A LONDON DIARY

THE Eddisbury by-election does not prove that Common Wealth is about to sweep the country, but only that a large number of people, Labour, Liberals and unattached, object to not being allowed to vote in favour of social change during the war. I do not think Common Wealth could go very far if there were no political truce; under present conditions I should expect Sir Richard Acland and his friends to build up a group of younger M.P.s which should form a natural ally of Labour. Common Wealth could never have a large working-class following, I think, but Tom Wintringham, in a most interesting article in the March issue of *Left News*, mentions four groups from which Common Wealth finds increasing support. Wintringham points out that, as things are, men in the Services can only safely speak on a Conservative platform, and that at Midlothian he had energetic support from officers and men who had to be restrained from helping him lest they should get into trouble. Secondly, he found strong support in the ranks of the new technician class. Thirdly, he says "living Christianity" is looking for a channel for political expression; and fourthly that, young people, no longer allowed to work at elections for the Labour Party, and not Conservatives, welcome Common Wealth candidates. He looks forward to some kind of Popular Front which will include all the progressive parties. That would be sense. But it would mean the Labour Party Executive breaking its usual habit of stamping on any possibly vital ally, and it would mean, to make the alliance comprehensive, the discovery of some satisfactory working arrangement between Communists and other progressive parties. Of that there is no sign. Communists and Labour are both attacking Common Wealth, and Labour and Communism are squaring up for a bitter battle at Whitsun.

* * *

On this question of Communist affiliation I have now read a great spate of literature both from Transport House and King Street. The new Labour Party pamphlet, *The Communist Party and the War*, establishes by a series of conclusive quotations that the Communist attitude before Germany attacked Russia was "defeatist." Secondly, it proves once again that it is silly for Harry Pollitt to argue in the *Daily Herald* that the party line is not dictated by the Comintern. The constitution of the Comintern makes absolute obedience obligatory on all constituent parties. Thirdly, the effect of affiliation now would be not unity, but disintegration. No one who knows anything of the parties or the personalities could doubt that. The real Com-

munist case is simply that Capitalism, whether run by Liberals, Conservatives or Social Democrats, leads inevitably to war and that the only hope for humanity lies in the Soviet Union. But even that leaves unsolved the immediate problem. If "unity" is the object two policies are at least theoretically possible. The first would be an arrangement with Moscow to end the dictation of the Comintern, in which case I should expect Harry Pollitt to be the dominant figure in the Labour movement before long, and the second is to create a working alliance for a limited objective.

* * *

"Kairouan in flames." The headline evokes a flood of memories. The crowded lanes just wide enough for a loaded mule to pass; the Arabs who sold rugs and brass pans or who would sit all day to show the occasional European a selection of gorgeous carpets while they served cups of Turkish coffee and talked of the ill state of the land; the little square where we bought for a few pence the sort of earthen pitcher which the woman of Samaria carried to the well. Under my feet now is a carpet that I bought with a sense of triumph that is not at all diminished by the knowledge that if I had had more patience and drunk more coffee and known more about oriental methods I should have got it a couple of pounds cheaper. The man who sold these splendid rugs and carpets was a Destourian, an Arab nationalist, who did us the almost incredible favour of inviting us to his home for tea and after a surprising meal, eaten off a table tricked out with tawdry finery from the West (mats and crockery of the "present from Brighton" variety) took us into the woman's quarters and introduced us to his wife. This was not the only sign that the harem was astir. Next day, outside the great Mosque a veiled woman stopped D. and beckoned her aside. For a moment she uncovered her face and whispered: "Tell the women in your country that we too shall soon be free as you are."

* * *

The Mosque itself is one of the most ancient and splendid of the Arab world. A fountain I remember stands in the great square, and round it are patterns made of indentations of varying sizes. If you have faith or imagination you can believe the story they tell you that these holes are the footsteps of all the animals whose labour was used in building the mosque. According to this legend the large indentations are the marks of the hoofs of camels and horses, the smaller those of mules and asses and perhaps of sheep and goats. I am glad to hear news that this Mosque, with its superb dome from which the call to prayer has sounded at sundown through all these centuries, its brilliant mosaics and exquisitely proportioned pillars, has escaped the fire. It stood outside the city whose streets only approached it from one side. From the outer rim the belt of green faded quickly into the Sahara. They told me that the nomad tribes starved often in the desert and that, at best, the French authorities would sometimes in time of great famine provide an occasional ration of bread. If the triumphant conquerors sink some wells in the desert another generation of Arabs may be able to forget the fire which has destroyed their city.

* * *

One more memory of Kairouan. In an inconspicuous house we saw the plate of an organisation corresponding to our Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. This society was organised by a remarkable French woman who I remember meeting in Tunis. Nowhere is such a society more needed than in the Mediterranean, where the notion of treating beasts with humanity (in distinction to dedicating fountains to generations centuries dead) has never penetrated very far. Soon after seeing that plate we watched one of the most primitive of sights—the man with the camel engaged in the incredibly wasteful method of land irrigation. A camel was harnessed to a contrivance which filled a skin with water from a well. When the skin was full the camel went up the slope, with the man shouting by his side. At the top of the slope the skin was upset and the water ran down in an earthern channel; a little each time reached the tilled ground below. Each time the camel turned with his load the man jabbed him viciously between the legs with a jagged pointed stick. We watched and turned away disgusted. The need for education both in irrigation and in kindness to animals was certainly apparent. Later that evening we saw something which did not modify this conviction but which did suggest that nothing short of the jab of a sharp stick in the testicles is likely to cause much pain to a camel. Outside the walls a group of camels were having a meal of prickly pear. Now the spikes on prickly pear are to my knowledge as sharp and nearly as strong as needles. (I learnt that first in South Africa, where as a boy I shared in the odd occupation of burning off these prickles before cutting up the juicy leaves to feed to ostriches). But the camels seemed not to notice the spikes. They ate the leaves, spikes and all, as if they were bread and butter.

* * *

Many readers were excited by the article we published recently from the *New Republic*, written by Michael Straight. Straight, who is now in the American Air Force, has expressed his views about what ought to be done, in a book called *Make this the Last War*. It has now reached me from the U.S.A., with an extract from Pearl Buck's appreciation on the dust jacket: "I have not read a book coming out of this war which has moved me so much as this one. It is a young man's sword and he wields it with a strong right arm." The book contains serious errors, and it would need a certain amount of editing before it was published in this country, but I scarcely think it will escape the attention of all the English publishers. CRITIC

A BURST OF OPTIMISM

If sacrificial taxes spread a Budgetary gloom,
Life is brightened by the prospect of a post-war trading boom
As the charter of prosperity the British public scan
In the Treasury White Paper (or the Washington White Plan).

One a Fund for stabilising,
One a Union for clearing,
Both are plans for energising,
Both to debtor nations cheering;
One in bancor makes advances,
One's with unitas provided,
Each will manage world finances,
Which has not yet been decided.

Nations with diminished credit and with commerce moribund
May be members of the Union (or shareholders in the Fund)
Qualified by credit quotas on Keynes' Bancor Bank to draw
(Or through Unitas to borrow from the hoard of Morgenthau).

The White Paper's staunch supporters
Claim the Keynes' Plan is the right plan,
While New York's financial quarters
Are insistent on the White Plan.
Debtor States at the proposal
Do not share the experts' rancour—
They will have at their disposal
Either unitas or bancor.

While experiencing shortages in shillings, pounds and pence,
Gifts of unitas (or bancor) seem a bounteous Providence,
And once Wall Street and Threadneedle Street their differences adjust,
World finance will be conducted in a burst of mutual trust.

Then the fund will be promoted
As the Banker of the nations
(Or the Union will be voted
To control price fluctuations)
Each with monetary units as
A currency sheet-anchor,
Which either will be unitas,
Or alternatively, bancor. SAGITTARIUS.

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Geraldine Marshall.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Mrs. ——— said she became suspicious of her husband when he came on leave last October. Two letters arrived for him with kisses on the back. When she asked her husband about these he told her they were from the War Office.—*News of the World.*

Germany is the home of music, Paris the home of fashion, and London the home of exchange and finance. These are things which cannot be altered even by world wars.—Letter from Sir Ernest Benn in *Daily Telegraph.*

THE NAVY LOOKS AT BEVERIDGE

A WEEK of lecturing to the Navy on the Beveridge Report has convinced me of three things. First, naval men of all ranks are far more alert intellectually than comparable civilians; secondly, the wide implications of the Report are understood even when its details are not clear; lastly, there is great confusion about the present political situation. An explanation (as far as anyone can understand it!) of the Government's position electrified the whole audience. Every man leaned forward in his seat. A brisk résumé and analysis of the agreed points brought a spontaneous burst of clapping. Sailors and Marines were variously under the impression that the Labour Party unreasonably opposed the Report, that the insurance companies had sunk it, that it was a "Home for Heroes Report," that the rich opposed it, and that the unions disliked it. Certainly many who came to the lectures had tried to read the Report, many more had discussed it unread, and the majority had really tried to understand what had happened to it now and had failed. They were in stations where daily papers were rare—I saw one in eight days, and that a local right wing journal—and they rely for news on hearsay and the B.B.C. Weekly papers, more colourful than the NEW STATESMAN, are read avidly, but are no substitute for a full supply of factual daily news, printed not spoken. The Admiralty, already conscious of this problem, with these good brains in its care, might well think about a daily broadsheet for the remoter stations, provided that the news came straight without the taint of regulation hand-out.

In this context a lecturer discussing current problems was a godsend, and no personal compliment was implied when the men of a ship's company said, "Why can't we have more like this?" One of the most revealing comments was astonishment that one should know the subject—a neat reminder of the mental muddle in which good brains find themselves when insufficiently supplied with news. And these are good brains, who picked up every point on a high intellectual level and worked the lecturer really hard. Many of the personnel are, of course, H.O., i.e. for hostilities only, and they brought with them a rich assortment of civilian experience. Insurance men, solicitors, industrial experts, accountants, works managers, journalists and students were in the audience, as well as postmen and salesmen and cooks and technicians. But all are sailors now, and Service Regulations wrap them closely. I was frequently asked what could be done to advance the Report. I answered that letters to M.P.s and to the local and national press, resolutions from clubs and organisations, and deputations to interview M.P.s in their own constituencies could do much. But I was always careful to add "Of course you understand that I am speaking of civilians now." Once the whole room roared with ironical laughter, but several times the officers in charge emphasised the moral

after I had finished answering questions, pointing out that passive citizenship gets nothing done at all. Here the Service has a difficult problem to solve: how can men who must be physically and psychologically remote from civil life avoid passivity? and how can men whose efficiency depends on closely corporate team-work retain their individuality? The influx of vigorous-minded citizens has underlined the problem; regulations admirable for training up young Service men are ill-adapted to the middle-aged. To have to go to church or wear your mackintosh when you prefer a coat is merely irksome. But really onerous is the segregation from civilian life, and that is unavoidable. It is here that the Naval Education Service has such scope and increasingly does well. It is an imaginative gesture to bring a lecturer 600 miles to talk on anything as topical and controversial as the Beveridge Report.

All ranks were much more interested in the broad pattern and implications of the scheme than in its details. Only one audience, the Chief Petty Officers, when they had avidly absorbed the economic aspects of the Plan, made me go step by step through the details. As an audience these men of the peacetime navy were outstanding. The W.R.N.S. officer who said "What do they ask? Do they ask what they will get out of it?" was far off the mark, although her guess was right for civilian audiences where the standard old-age pensioner or an affronted widow always has a lengthy innings. Unemployment was the main preoccupation. Nobody thought we could achieve full employment under the old system, although many feared an element of compulsion in whatever system is to come. In various forms I met the idea that unemployment is necessary to capitalism and that the two must stay or go together; this carried the assumption that the community must split into those who want the two to stay and those who want them both to go. Curiously, nobody cited wartime planning as an argument for continued post-war State control. In fact the whole idea of economic planning seemed to be quite new. It had been obvious to most of them that there never had been enough work to go round, and they thought in terms of static economic life. The idea that some industries could be contracted and others consciously expanded was foreign ground. They could all see that civil aviation, for example, might expand, or that the harness trade contracted in the past, but it was the planning notion which was strange. Therefore they found it hard to grasp the principles of training, for past experience suggested that trainees either failed to find work, or that they cut the throats of those already skilled. Nobody had thought we could interlock training with economic planning. In the light of this new principle, training seemed, to those who left school at fourteen, a sort of Mecca barred by the trade unions. Eventually, when all these points were sorted out, somebody frequently stood up and said, "Then who will do the nasty jobs? We shall want builders' labourers. If people won't do that, shall we compel them? Everybody will want to better themselves." A sad commentary on thwarted hopes and deadening routine. Conversely I was told that we should be spoon-fed and should lose incentive to work. Also that malingerers and slackers would score. Information that the Plan envisaged strong sanctions against exploiters was generally approved. A notion that the Plan was all pay and no work had made the ward room think it silly and the lower deck a swindle.

Cost was raised at every meeting, always by somebody in the income-tax-paying strata. Where was the money to come from? During my whole visit I only met one person who saw the scheme as a self-oiling circulation of wealth and who considered that much of the "cost" was a rechannelling of existing payments—and that was an admiral. Apart from him, and a chaplain who got as far as saying, "Wealth is made of goods, not cash," I met nobody in touch with current economic thought. Even those who honestly confessed they could not count the noughts on millions said the scheme seemed "terribly expensive." The lower decks left the millions alone, but were concerned that the benefits should vary with the cost of living; they showed a genuine concern about the "two-thousand-a-year man who would only get the same benefit as the two-hundred-a-year chap." I had the feeling that nobody was wedded to the flat-rate contribution and that they would equally accept a graded tax on income as in the New Zealand scheme. Apparently the Navy, unlike civilians, is no lover of insurances as such; the men realised that the contributions did not buy the benefits, but that we had to form a communal pool of purchasing power, getting the money in as fairly and acceptably as possible from the whole community.

There was a lurking fear that the big industrialists and the insurance companies might so twist the finance as to scupper the whole scheme. It was this fear that gave an air of unreality to the plan, and it was here that Homes for Heroes, or Beveridge-bribing-the-worker, usually arose. I found I could partly dispel this uneasiness by giving a friendly description of Sir William Beveridge but this did not touch a lurking scepticism about a remote anonymous "They." It is certainly this suspicion that the Report is either a swindle or that, if enacted, it would be twisted, which deters people from taking political action to push it. The mismanaged "Thirties" have left a legacy of lassitude rooted in disbelief.

The political question cropped up all the time, even after factual lectures non-political in content. With ruthless logic the men said to themselves, and also to me, "if we want *this* we must do *that*, and will the present Government do *that*?" A general election or a Beveridge Referendum to include the Forces, were suggested. But I did not meet any real confidence that the existing parties are efficient. A foreign observer would have deduced that Labour was a sleeping servant and the Conservatives all thieves, and that the Navy was not keen on either. Certainly the Party which has the post-war support of these straight-thinking men is the one which will succeed; for these have been selected into a high-powered service; they are practical people who know things and can do things, and who, after the war, will filter into key positions as skilled workers, foremen, administrators, managers. Many of them are now looking for political allegiance, and they are groping amid the chaos of new thinking for a focal point of political expression. They are outside but they wish to be inside. In one day both a skilled electrician and a Commander R.N. each said to me, "Who are *We* who will do these things?"

JOAN S. CLARKE

HENRY JAMES AND THE LEANING TOWER

SOME of the unpublished letters of Henry James to Edward Warren illumine that last period of his life in which, laying aside the questioning and physical torment of the preceding years, he plunged entirely into work for the Allies. There is a special fitness in this, for Edward Warren was James' architect as well as his old and intimate friend; he had stood sponsor to James' love for England, and for fifteen years of mounting contentment James had lived at Rye in a house which, though built two centuries before, was now ordered from cellar to eaves by Warren.

The war years cannot be regarded as the crown of Henry James' career, though certainly there is something fine in the last energies of the old man who formed a *point de rallye* for both England and France. The occasional piece called "France" for instance, has never been bettered in its affirmation that "what happens to France happens to all that part of ourselves which we are most proud and most finely advised, to enlarge and cultivate and consecrate." Yet war is apt to give a spurious sense of identity with one's fellows, and it must be counted on balance a loss that so finely scrupulous and watchful a mind should have ceased to ring with enquiry, becoming instead

a civitas of sound
Where nothing but assent was found.

James lived most of his wartime life in a bloc of flats in Cheyne Walk; though a tall and un comely pile, not readily distinguishable from a orphanage or house of correction, this appeare to suit him very well. He had been ill, and found the "large area and conversational resources o London . . . a precious, in fact quite a remedial resource; and though I have but a couple of ampl rooms straight on the river, which I pay for by much dimmer rearward residuum, such a fine scra of front . . . very decently suffices and makes m more than content." This was in 1913; he could "ventilate and circulate" each afternoon, wit the assurance of finding "here and there a ble old friend at home about 5.30"; but he remaine an invalid, "regularly subject to such aggrava tions of pain toward the real close of day as t have to tear off my clothes for very anguish and tumble into bed by 8 o'clock."

At the outbreak of war he found himsel entirely in line with the public; this was a ne and intoxicating situation for him. He had no drawn directly upon political life or internationa affairs for some thirty years—not, in fact, sinc the revolutionaries and class warfare of *The Prin cess Casamassima*; but he had been a close friend of Paul Bourget and had envied the priestl station of the great French writers of the day Bourget in 1885 had defined the mandate of th nineteenth century mammoth—"the process o art is simply a sign of the history of moral life The book is the great initiator." This hegemon had always been denied to James, although ther are few current human problems which do not in effect sit whole among his pages; but now h could not sufficiently share the general sense o what was at stake in the struggle. His fine ap praisal of the way of life which was imperille made him, as public orator, the nonpareil; no could he cease deploring his lack of formal tie with the defenders of the right. Outwardly, i short, it was as if some old fire-ship, long silte up in the Cinque Port of his beloved Rye, wer now suddenly set alight, to burn to the water line as it sailed against the enemy.

On September 18th, 1914, he wrote to Warre "Your kindest of letters has come to me, breakin the silence with which we have had all to be stricke dumb since the great Nightmare began. It effect has been infinitely to hush *me* at least fro mere vain words." He could not remain in active, and soon came up to London: "I fin I can't stand, amid this awful tension, and no less this horrible 'immeasurable interest,' th too solitudinous and 'out of it' life of the countr any longer. I must be where I can hear and as and have informational contacts; I eat my hea out alone . . . You have all my sympathy i your loss of young relations (one lives with wrung heart) and your vision of the genial recruit etc. of your countryside. I find the vision of them —with whatever black shadows on it—unspeak ably uplifting and thrilling. All through thi shining heartless summer here I looked out Rye across the transparent air and exquisite blu Channel at the very edge of the horizon on just th other curve of which the Belgian infamies an abominations were going on; and the helples ache and rage of the scale of them were at time more than I could bear." This letter is writte on dead-white paper, which James rarely used and with his habitual black ink; the effect of th thick and tufted vertical strokes in his handwritin is like that of funeral plumage.

He was always inhibited by what he called hi "failure of consanguinity"; and in his progres towards naturalisation he may well have remem bered the example of Zola who had given, as h had the right, himself as a sacrifice to the Republic He had admired Zola's work, and said of it cyclic conception that "no finer act of courag and confidence" had been recorded in th history of letters. Re-meeting him in 1893 h had felt in him a man "with arrears of persona history to make up"; and although Zola wa by temperament a retiring, even a timid, man

he had exalted the position of the writer in society. No lover of France could but be agitated by her condition in 1898: "I can't even *spell* Dreyfus now," James wrote to Warren. He had had high hopes of the Republic: "Parliamentary government is really being put to the test, and bearing it well," he wrote to Grace Norton in 1877; but that a writer should come forward at the crisis was a surprise. He had known the great Frenchmen, Flaubert, Daudet, France, Zola himself, and the little ones, Meilhac, Sarcey, Coppée; and in 1889 he told William James that they were "finished, besotted mandarins, and their Paris is their celestial empire." Yet now a writer had outsoared the soldiers and the statesmen and the priests; James wrote to Warren in February, 1898, "Heavens, yes, the whole Paris business sickens and appals me—and I worked off a part of my feeling yesterday by writing to Zola. He won't, I think, however, go to prison. He will appeal, and there will be delays, and things will happen—elections and revulsions and *con*vulsions, and other things. As it was, I think, I fully believe, his sentence on Wednesday saved his life. If he had got less, or acquittal, or attenuation, he would have been *torn limb from limb* by the howling mob in the street."

In 1899 he returned to France; he loved the vernacular life of this country, and his *Little Tour in France* can always be re-read. But on this visit the Virgilian beauties of the country round Hyères seemed to him to contrast sharply with the condition of Paris; and even in the south of France he found something to criticise in the tokens of contemporary life. "Wondrous are the resources of this people," he wrote, "but (let us bear up!) hideous—apparently, mainly—their villas *as* villas. On many questions of taste——!" In a letter from the capital he recorded a more serious shock; "the extraordinary Paris, with its new—I mean more and more multiplied—manifestations of luxurious and extravagant extension and general chronic *expositionism* is a spectacle it would be interesting to assist at with you in some detail; awfully curious in its way. It strikes me as a monstrous massive flower of national decadence, the biggest temple ever built to material joys and the lust of the eyes, and drawing to it thereby all the forces of the nation as to a substitute for other—I mean other than Parisian—achievement. It's a strange great phenomenon, with a deal of beauty still in its great expensive symmetries and perspectives—and *such* a beauty of light."

This decadence in what had seemed to him the finest style of life could have been the moral subject of his last years of work; and in the serious comedy of *The Ivory Tower* there are signs that he was working towards it; but with the outbreak of war he turned to a short-run policy of siege-morality. This was a human choice; and while one may regret the loss of an incomparable guide, one must admit the implication of Virginia Woolf's remark that "perhaps no other elderly man existed in August, 1914, so well qualified to feel imaginatively all that the outbreak of war meant."

He was passionately proud of England, and prostrated by "the destruction of her magnificent young manhood. Nothing abates that; it's a black dead loss and woe—it makes me howl and almost collapse." Yet he remained a moral barometer of rare precision, and felt deeply any falling-off from this high example; and when in March, 1915, he accompanied the Warrens to the theatre he found it "an ordeal of painful sharpness. The mere inside of a theatre at present represents a terribly false note to me, haunted as one is with horrors, and with the one ideal of concentration; and the sight of the so large contingent of the portentously *bête* public cost me the keenest anguish. I feel, moreover, that this country (*with* which I so unutterably feel!) is now, or awfully ought to be, *in all ways* on her good behaviour before the world; and the ineptitude and wretchedness of its kind of that exhibition made me ask myself terrible questions. *Any* complacent display of hopeless amateurishness becomes in these conditions, to my imagination, a *general* dreadful portent." This note of warning does not recur; and on August 18th, 1915, he wrote of his naturalisation: "It *was* strange that at the end of all the fond years here I should still have been aware of anything further to attest; but my old attachment was chronic and the acuteness of the public situation made me somehow want to do something also in the key of acuteness. In short it had become anguish to hold off any longer from translating my participation and adhesion into the only terms that really would mean something; and now that it is done the sense of a false position corrected passes expression." Behind this personal easement it is possible to see a public misfortune; for previously he had accepted the lonely station of the artist and had persisted, as few writers can, in breaking new ground after his 70th year; and while we must rejoice in the acquisition of so great a champion of our cause, there is room also for agreement with Edmund Wilson when he says that Henry James "in writing *The Ivory Tower* had been much closer to contemporary realities than in becoming an English citizen."

JOHN RUSSELL

LEAVE THE CHAP ALONE

The Artists' International Association has arranged a show in the basement-shelter of Messrs. John Lewis's shop. According to a foreword in the catalogue:

> This is not just another exhibition of pictures. It is an exhibition with a new meaning and a new purpose. Too often art seems to be little more than a luxury which can only be enjoyed by the few who have the opportunity to learn to appreciate it, the time to visit exhibitions and the money to buy one of the more expensive of luxury goods. If that were all, what place would art have in total war?

The anonymous author has contrived in these few sentences to beg a quite wonderful number of questions. Art is, in fact, a luxury, to this extent that men can, and most men do, get through life without it. It is more than a luxury, because it excites some of the sensations that give most value and significance to the process of living. It is less than a luxury, because little wealth is required for its enjoyment. (The suggestion that in order to enjoy a picture one must have the money to buy it is too silly to require discussion.) It is true that most people cannot visit exhibitions; this is not so much because they lack the time as because there are few good pictures to be seen in England outside half a dozen big cities. The most important job C.E.M.A. can perform is to make good pictures available in every town. Next, the central falsehood—the assumption that art can be enjoyed, like ice-cream, without taking pains. Most people are without "the opportunity to learn" not through lack of time or money (they have enough of both for the movies) but because it does not occur to them that such learning will bring a rich reward. This is more than a class difference. Most of those who have had an expensive education are indifferent to art, and it is uncertain even whether most people are congenitally capable of enjoying any such arduous exercise of their faculties. In any case it is wicked nonsense to suggest that men can, without taking great trouble, appreciate the masterpieces whether of literature, music or painting. Finally to the question what place art has in total war, the answer is quite simply "None." The same is true of delight in landscape, the pursuit of truth, the cultivation of friendship, and almost all other civilised activities.

The foreword continues

> This exhibition shows the way to a new integration of art and life, approaching more nearly to religious art than to the art of the last three hundred years. Just as, through Church art, people were taught to believe in Christianity and to live as Christians, now, through art of the kind exhibited here, people may learn to have a belief in civilisation, and may be stimulated to fight for it. It is not surprising, therefore, that as the content is similar the form also becomes alike.

Probably the author of these dicta considers himself to be "progressive"—I suggest that he is pathetically trying to put the clock back. Printing, I would remind him, has been invented, and so has photography: a natural consequence is that the painter no longer is concerned to perform functions in which the printed word and the photographic reproduction are far more efficient than the picture. It would perhaps be unfair to judge the stimulating effect of art by this exhibition, but I should be rather surprised if anyone fought the better for having visited it. Art can incidentally stimulate men to fight, because the happiness it affords is one of the fruits of the free life; but the more art is regimented, the less it is worth fighting for. For the artist is an immeasurably odder creature than all this talk allows for. "Artists," we are informed, "must be prepared to work in co-operation if they are to play their essential part in the task of reconstruction which will face the post-war world." a sentence no less conspicuous for the wisdom of its purport than for the distinction of its style. One wonders whether the writer has ever met an artist. Churches and monarchs, aristocracies and bourgeoisies, have failed to domesticate these peculiar creatures; and it seems unlikely that dictatorships, whether of gangsterdom or of the proletariat or even of the Little Man, will be any more successful. In this exhibition, despite all the jabber in the catalogue, most of the painters have quietly pursued their individual courses. The standard attained, it is true, is hardly higher than that to which we are accustomed at Burlington House. But this cannot justly be blamed upon any preoccupation with ideology. We have been treated, all too evidently, to "just another exhibition of pictures." There is indeed a room of paintings intended "to show that artists can formulate and express *ideas* as well as illustrate and interpret *facts*." But they do not noticeably succeed in this purpose, although they were all "painted specially for this exhibition in the last six weeks." (This fact is equally inept as a boast and as an excuse.) Incomparably the best is Mr. le Bas's *Bathers on the Serpentine*, thoughtful in design, sensitive in texture, imaginative in colour. But it can have no conceivable propagandist effect, since bathing is a recreation at least as popular in Nazi Germany as in bourgeois England or Communist Russia. The next best is Miss Beryl Sinclair's *Air, Light, Land and Water*, an agreeable picture of the lake in Regent's Park, which is equally devoid of "ideas." The "form" moreover, of the pictures is, despite the catalogue, as various as the "content." Abstract, Royal Academic, surrealist, and impressionist paintings jostle one another; witness the signatures of John Tunnard, Kokoschka, Kenneth Rowntree, Ruskin Spear, Robin Guthrie, Fred Uhlmann, Lowes Luard, Julian Trevelyan and Augustus John. Since the A.I.A. has either failed or not attempted to affect the practice of its own members—and I wonder how many of these realised with what doctrines they were to be associated—there may seem small danger of other artists being disturbed by this programme. But there are many high-minded and energetic and very valuable people who have never given much thought to art and who may therefore in their innocence be taken in by these silly and shop-soiled pronouncements. English painting is in a better way than it has been for over a century, and it is important that no pressure should be imposed upon artists either to "co-operate" or to "formulate and express ideas." If progressive people attempt any such interference, the first result must be to turn all self-respecting artists into Tories. I suggest that the value of all patronage, whether given by individuals or, as one hopes, increasingly by public bodies, is proportionate to the freedom with which the artist is left to pursue his own wilful way.

The multiplication of art-schools has impelled far too many people who could be otherwise useful to become professional painters. I doubt whether one in ten among the students possesses the talent required for producing a respectable easel picture, still less a wall-picture. Unfortunately there is no longer the demand there once was for craftsmen to paint furniture and china, which is the most at which a majority of such students could ever be competent. If the demand for applied art can be stimulated, so much the better. But it is impossible to view without dismay the prospect of these uninspired persons being employed to cover walls with the formulation and expression of "ideas." Painting, I conclude, is to be commended as a hobby, but should usually be discouraged as a profession.

RAYMOND MORTIMER.

THE CAUCASUS

BY PUSHKIN.

I STAND above the Caucasus, where lies
By the cold torrent's edge the waste of snow;
Motionless hovers, level with my eyes,
An eagle risen from a peak below.
Here is the birthplace of the streams, and here
The first dread motions of the avalanche stir.

Below me pass the clouds, serenely fair;
Through them the falling waters ever sound;
Far down, the shoulders of the rocks are bare,
Grey scrub and meagre masses clothe the ground;
And lower yet, filled with the sound of birds,
Are leafy forests and the deer in herds.

Next, roofs that nestle in the mountain sides,
And sheep that crawl the grass by torrent streams;
Down to the happy vale the shepherd strides,
Past shadowed banks the swift Aragva gleams,
Whilst in the gorge the robber tribesmen wait
Where sweeps the Terek, savagely elate.

Like a young beast of prey the river roars,
Wild for its food through iron bars and locks;
With useless anger he assaults the shores
And with his hungry waters licks the rocks,
In vain; no comfort's here, no food for him,
The unhearing gorge confines him, hard and grim.

Thus by our edicts an impetuous nation
Of wild free tribesmen lies oppressed and bound,
And silent Caucasus with indignation
Seethes as the alien forces hem him round . . .*

Translated by FRANCES CORNFORD

* Pushkin cancelled this last, unfinished, stanza, which could not be published at the time. It is found in his M.S.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

Civil Defence Artists, 92, New Bond Street

The eleventh C.D.A. exhibition offers the usual medley of skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled pictures. The most important function of the group, we consider, is to encourage painting as a recreation, and the professional artists who exhibit are therefore to be valued chiefly for the stimulus their work may give to the amateurs. Already the C.D.A. has made known one self-taught painter of extraordinary talent, Ruth Dennison. The current show has two works by her as well as paintings by such well-known painters as du Plessis, William Scott, Vera Cuningham, Devas, Leila Faithful, and Denis Mathews. There are interesting works also by Daphne Chart, Peggie West, A. Hickman-Smith and W. Main. Gotlib and Zulavski represent Polish charm, and Schames continues his striking experiments in mosaic.

THE MOVIES

"Stalingrad," at the Plaza
"Guardian of the Flame," at the Empire

This staggering film is the nearest approximation yet produced to the "feelies" of the future. Most of the shots were taken during the vast battle itself; if you have a stomach for reality at its most terrible and its most courageous, here it is. One of the most striking sequences shows the massed use of "rocket" guns against the enemy; they cut the picture like the arrows on a medieval tapestry. Other strange new weapons—the aerial sledge—make unexpected appearances. We see enough of Stalingrad at the beginning of the picture to know that it was a finely planned and beautiful modern city; the air photographs at the end make it a matter of astonishment that anyone could still be alive in its ruins. The victory scene when the two triumphant sections of the Red Army meet and embrace, running and stumbling in the snow, is terrific. There are also sudden moments of silence and beauty, and outbursts of song.

Guardian of the Flame is a melodrama that begins excitingly but becomes less and less acceptable. A widow refuses to receive the Press on the day of her husband's funeral, and this undemocratic conduct excites suspicion. An ace journalist therefore forces his way into her drawing-room, and, since she is Miss Hepburn, falls in love. At the end a Fascist plot is foiled.

Correspondence

BOMBING

SIR,—Our generation is witnessing a strange phenomenon—a revival of cannibal ethics in the centre of Europe. "If I eat a Blue Quill—that's good; if a Blue Quill eats me—that's bad." This simplified way of thinking has become out of date among savages. Instead, it has been adopted in full by those who have called themselves members of a superior Aryan race.

Numerous letters captured by Russian troops contain mention of the R.A.F. raids on enemy cities. Many of them are somewhat of a psychological puzzle. "Father wrote me that after a big raid on Dusseldorf six hundred dead were found on the station building. How terrible! The way the English are murdering helpless civilians! But I trust they will pay double and more for this."

These meditations are the brain products not of "Blue Quill" but of Gefreiter Heinz Greulich writing to Gefreiter Karl Scheffer, Field Post 09778. It apparently does not occur to the author that there were "helpless civilians" in Coventry as well as Dusseldorf. Gefreiter Greulich evidently is not the only recruit to cannibalism. The same indignation, the same demands for retribution are to be found in the letters of Gefreiter Y. Geer to Sergeant Adalbert Smolenski (Field Post 17.176/C) and Tilda Schappacher (Wiersen Rhine Province 55 CA Street) to Private Edward Schappacher (Field Post 06.631) and numerous others.

Such statements made by official Nazi propaganda might have been regarded as yet another sneaky attempt to place responsibility on the shoulders of others. But when people make use of such arguments in private correspondence they must be looked upon as a spontaneous phenomenon. There is no reason for doubting that many Germans still retain a civilised outlook. They certainly realise that the bombing of Cologne, Essen, Hamburg is the inevitable result of bombing London, Birmingham, Glasgow, that Hitler is the one to be blamed for the death of 600 persons at Dusseldorf station. But they have thus far been obliged to keep silence. The savage elements set the tone in Germany. The atmosphere in that country is poisoned and can be cleared only by tearing up the root of the trouble. And to do so this root must be found. Certain directions as to this may be found again in German correspondence. Here, for example, is an excerpt from a letter of a German naval non-commissioned officer, Herbert Halleck, to Gefreiter Helmuth Schultze: "The Russian and English—these *Untermenschen*—asked for this way and now they've got it. This time we'll hit them so hard they'll forget which end is up; they'll be sorry they got themselves into this war. The hour has not struck yet, especially for the Tommies. But they'll come and find us ready."

Such outbursts mean a great many things. The word "Untermenschen" offers the key to the puzzle of the double criterion used by the Aryan savages in regard to air raids. A sadistic foretaste of Great Britain's future (one of the main motifs in many letters) shows that there still are people in the Third Reich who haven't lost faith in the overwhelming superiority of the German armed forces over the rest of the world. It is consistent for people brought up on the cult of force as final arbiter to regard as inferior beings, and *ipso facto* outlaw all those they consider weaker than themselves. To argue with such people by appealing to the principles of European civilisation and higher ethics would be as futile as discussing painting with a blind, or music with a deaf person. But they will be rendered utterly harmless if they are shown in practice how mistaken they were in estimating the relative strength of Germany and her foes. In that case they will be unable even from their own cannibal point of view to put forth the argument about "Untermenschen." The germs of savagery poisoning the atmosphere in Germany will then be automatically deprived of culture medium, and the nation's healthy nucleus will regain lost ground.

ALEXANDER YANOVSKY

[*The above letter has reached us by cable from Moscow. The writer, Alexander Yanovsky, is a well-known Moscow journalist, a member of the Foreign Committee of the Soviet Writers' Union.*]

SIR,—The Bishop of Winchester, who earlier was Bishop of bombed Coventry, wrote the other day to his diocese to discourage and discountenance what he sees as a growing tendency to speak of our raids on Germany as something over which we may rightly gloat. I am glad to see that "Critic" goes further, and speaks in depreciation of the American daylight bombing of towns like Paris and Antwerp, where so many people, old and young, who should be our friends and allies, are reported to have been killed. There has unfortunately been much gloating over the bombing of Antwerp and the Renault works near Paris, but it is doubtful if those who gloated knew of the many civilian deaths which have been reported by the German, French and Belgian radio. The scenes in Paris at the public funeral given to hundreds of victims, and the processions to and from Antwerp Cathedral, when the many large and small coffins were taken to their graves, were unknown here, for neither the press nor the B.B.C. reported them.

Surely, if these attacks upon friendly peoples are continued they cannot but excite resentment and hatred. They can only result in the erection of sorry monuments which will disfigure the history of modern warfare and perpetuate hatred.

It is worth noting that in the ranks of our airmen, poets are appearing who fail to see what of honour or glory attaches to a training which ends in the dropping of bombs upon the defenceless. Here is the voice of Flight-Lieutenant John Pudney, who speaks of

> The serene marble broken
> The stray shot killing child or clown. . . .

and again of

> The mean killing, the unjust
> Abasement of body and spirit. . . .

or let us turn to what was said by the late John Llewellyn Rees, writing before the war, and contemplating his bombing-machine and its fearful powers for evil:

> Pray God he'd never have to fly one, with tons of death in its belly, over some darkened town, while old men and women and children grovelled in trench and cellar far below.

But this lost poet never contemplated a greater horror, that a day was not far distant when Allies having to earn their living in towns conquered by the enemy would be bombed to death while their homes near by would become tombs for their wives and children. No one knowing of such things could gloat over them, but no one is allowed by our press to know clearly that they occur.

Swift is the growth of hate. I would like to remind your readers that it was as recently as January 27th, 1940, that Mr. Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, condemned the bombing of an enemy as a "new and odious form of attack" and refused to listen to the clamour then arising that bombers should cease to drop leaflets by night and load up with "beautiful bombs." I may add that when the present writer read Mr. Churchill's strong denunciation of a new and odious form of warfare, it seemed to me (I wrote on February 10th, 1940) that I recognised the good sense and good feeling I had always associated with the man who uttered it.

Bramley, Surrey. LEO CHIOZZA MONEY

ARMY EDUCATION

SIR,—Consideration of Army Education from my own standpoint has provided no more reason for satisfaction than from that of Five Members of H.M. Forces. Would that I had had five such in my usual audience for Army Bureau of Current Affairs lecture and discussion periods.

First I would pay a tribute to the pamphlets produced by A.B.C.A. That on India did clearly state the Indian case. The British case was stressed, but not immoderately. If officers have been giving ill-informed, biased talks, then it is they who have misread, perverted or misunderstood the matter provided by A.B.C.A.

My own experience of a month or two ago in attempting to carry out the A.B.C.A. aims of making all soldiers socially conscious, brought me up against two main difficulties:

(1) Apathy on the part of the senior officers. Discussion periods during parade hours, at the

recommended winter scale of 2 or 3 hours each week, in my own battalion were only included in the programme after strong complaints from Divisional H.Q. Soon they began to disappear from the programme, or to consist of purely military subjects. Junior officers rarely get chances to make time for discussion periods in a training programme issued without provision for them. The more so when their immediately superior officers treat the whole subject as unimportant or as a joke.

(2) Apathy and cynicism on the part of the men. This apathy was not excessive, and I attribute much of it to my own inexpert handling of questions that could have been made interesting. The cynicism was quite widespread and really alarming. Obviously due to a three-year-long neglect of organised discussions of war aims among N.C.O.s and men, it took the following forms: That we are fighting for a way of life and government that is desirable and good in itself was regarded as a fiction put about by the authorities to bolster up the morale of the forces. That we are fighting for a better Britain after the war was regarded as a bait dangled in front of the army donkey's nose, later to be snatched away. Several men supported their distrust by pointing to the perpetuation and accentuation of class distinction in our organisation of the army. On the other hand any assertion of a narrow, purely nationalist background to the war was accepted as natural and correct. Added to this, several men were openly anti-Semitic, and even more feared and hated all refugees for "taking Englishmen's jobs."

There is grave cause for concern here. My own experience in my own battalion, and in neighbouring units where I attempted to make inquiries, would suggest that the Army forms a section of opinion which has too long been neglected, and is still being neglected. Only a minority of officers regard the problem as serious, and I suggest that their number includes few battalion and company-commanders. It is not too late to act. Army life has not dulled every mind. One discussion on educational reform elicited many spontaneous suggestions from men, including a serious plea for attention to a presentation of the facts of sex at some stage of school life.

If we do not take Army Education seriously, whole battalions of men will be passing into the post-war world regarding victory as meaningless, and none with any reply to that nationalist propaganda which is a potential obstruction to a workable international order. In every infantry battalion there is a trained P.T. instructor. Why so rarely a trained lecturer from the Army Educational Corps?

INFANTRY SUBALTERN
Home Forces

EDUCATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

SIR,—THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION says nothing about our proposal for the immediate setting up of a United Nations Bureau of Educational Reconstruction. Neither does it refer to our long-range proposals for an International Organisation for Education as one of the principal parts of any new international authority. Perhaps we may safely assume your support of such proposals and of our plea for education in world citizenship, but your comments on that part of our report which is concerned with the re-education of Germany are puzzling, unless they are intended to refer to ideas that have been advanced elsewhere rather than to the actual proposals put forward by our Commission.

You write tha. "Germans alone can re-educate Germans," and that if any group of victorious enemy governments attempt to promote a democratic outlook by force it will produce an exactly contrary result. So do we. "... *the German people must first be re-educated and, in our view they must re-educate themselves. No one else can ...*", and "*neither should they attempt to force upon the German people 'education' for any particular form of state.*" We say it over and over again!

You warn against "a nationalist reaction ... which will discredit ... those Germans who consent to become our hirelings." We want none, for in our view "... *the quislings have been utterly discredited.*" You "assume that the Nazi machine will be smashed." We say that is a condition precedent of all re-education. You suggest that in certain circumstances it might be necessary "to suspend for a time the teaching of subjects that verge on politics." We have not suggested that, but we entirely agree "tha. the first step is to promote a period of free discussion, during which hypnotised Germans will learn not only that the Nazis have failed, but why."

If there *is* any real disagreement over this part of our report is it, perhaps, over our basic assumption? We have assumed that for a time, Germany is likely to be directly administered by Occupying Powers, and we are concerned to ensure that under such a system the responsibility of the Occupying Powers for Education should be exercised through some man of outstanding character, vision, understanding and ability, who should be carefully chosen in advance He should have sufficient authority to ensure that the Nazi control of the universities and schools is smashed and that the teaching of bogus sciences, racial hatred and aggressive militarism are eradicated. Let us hope that the Germans will do it themselves, but for our own safety we must make certain it is done. For the rest, it should be the aim of this High Commissioner to do all he can to help the schools in a period of chaos and to what he usefully can to assist the German people in their own re-education. We make certain suggestions as to how he might do this, and should most warmly welcome constructive proposals.

C. W. JUDD
Secretary, Joint Commission of the London International Assembly and Council for Education in World Citizenship.

FULL EMPLOYMENT

SIR,—May I call the attention of your readers to an aspect of the unemployment problem which is persistently ignored—perhaps because it is considered disreputable?

In all this talk about the imperative need for "full employment" no one seems to remember that it used to be thought desirable that everyone should be as unemployed as possible. "If everyone did *only x* hours work per day ..."

We are still, I fear, dominated by the puritan theory of the sanctity of work. What is wrong with unemployment is not unemployment itself, but the fact that not enough goods are being produced, and the still more disturbing fact that the people who are unemployed are too poor and too incompetent to enjoy their leisure. We are, in fact, parsimonious and disapproving where we ought to be generous and envious.

One of my friends who goes to the coal face at 3 p.m., gets home at midnight, and gets up at midday, is in "full employment," but there is something to be said for his being unemployed for half the week—on full pay.

Surely the abstract notion of "full employment" is idiotic. What we should aim at is the least amount of employment required to produce whatever standard of security and comfort is thought desirable. After some generations of "leisure-ethics" people might at last learn how to enjoy themselves, and then if we could give six million men a year's holiday so much the better—though, of course, we could not bear it if they enjoyed themselves in the *wrong* way, such as standing at street corners doing a spot of mass observation.

W. J. H. SPROTT

ETHICS WITHOUT REVELATION

From Gerald Petrie.

When Mr. Edwards says that your attitude to affairs "is an essentially religious attitude," and that "people like you are all right; for whatever you think you believe, you can't get the Christianity out of your skin," he seems to me to be confusing religion and Christianity.

When he says that "it is possible to argue with some show of success that biology supports the ruthlessness of the strong," I would like to see the argument and

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JONATHAN CAPE

to have the chance to answer it, if insects, birds, fish and mammals, in fact all forms of life, had not already convinced the protagonist.

Is man the foremost animal because of his ruthlessness? Could he have achieved his mental growth whereby he gained and maintains his superiority, by savage brutality? Could he have even achieved it without a strong sense of community, and could he have become and remained communal without a strong individual urge to self-subordination and self-sacrifice for the common good—without loving his neighbour—in other words, without a religious attitude to life?

Throughout the period allowed to us by history dimly to gaze upon our ancestors, man has been a religious animal, living "neighbourly"; and if history shows us mainly man's lapses from that attitude, it is because destruction is more dramatic and more vivid than growth.

Had man been even mainly ruthlessly self-seeking, could he have survived? Or surviving, have developed the complexity of intelligence that made Jesus of Nazareth possible? From where religion springs we comprehend as little as we know of the origin of life, but our survival and development have depended upon the one as surely as upon the other. Allah is Allah, whom we cannot escape save at the price of destruction; and whether we choose to call Allah Jupiter, Jehovah, the Trinity or the Life Force, and whichever human manifestation we select as his prophet, we shall behave in much the same way.

The authority of Christianity as of other creeds has been used for many irreligious and ruthlessly destructive purposes that forever disentitle it to speak for or to represent the religion inherent in man's soul.

To sum up, man is not religious as a sideline, or an afterthought in history—he is because he is religious. And the measure of his hold on life as a species is the measure of the strength of his religion.

From F. Evans.

If it is the nature of man to be moral, he no more needs revelation to be good than a healthy man needs crutches. Is he by nature moral? The answer is that man is social. Morality has no other meaning and no other relevance than sociality. Man is "good" because he cannot live alone; he needs a mate and he needs workmates; he lives only with and through others. He is compounded of social instincts and emotions, and if these are checked he suffers. Paternal, maternal, protective, imitative, submissive, dominating, vain, ambitious, competitive, all these things he is, and a lot more, and they are all social. If man were not social he would not teach the young. If he were not social, the young would not learn, for the social conditioning of a child's egoism depends upon its social impulses—not merely the impulse to imitate, but also its susceptibility to approval and disapproval, the emotional content of every restraint, slap, smile, frown, congratulation. Man is warmed by approbation and freezes with disapproval. He does things for an audience, real or "ideal." So social is man that he carries an imaginary audience inside him and smirks and squirms over things about which the real world need never know. So social is man that a smile or a yawn travels faster than a rumour. So social is man that he will lynch a negro, hang the Kaiser, or give his last drop of rationed milk to a squawking cat. So social is man that all wars are righteous wars, crusades against tyranny or degeneracy, and blessed by God in every language.

From the Rev. W. E. Booth Taylor.

The crux of the matter lies here. If there is no divine standard of judgment, if the "laws" of righteousness, truth and justice are not of God Himself, if, that is, we have nothing outside the opinions of men, I fail to see that we can have any valid religious life at all; we cannot, as I see it, claim that morality has any solid foundation, and terms such as right and wrong, good and evil, become empty words. They have not and cannot have an imperative value for anyone. Again, if we have no supernatural "law" in the universe, if there is no divine standard of judgment, if all we have is men's opinions, by what standard or by what authority do we judge others? If there is no Divine Word, then one man's opinions are as good as another's. A criminal's as valid as a saint's. It is merely a matter of personal choice. Some prefer the way and life of a Livingstone, others those of a Hitler. And who shall say the other is wrong? On this basis each man becomes a law unto himself; as he wills, good becomes his evil and evil his good. Conscience, moral and spiritual values, principles of righteousness and truth do not exist.

From W. A. Powley.

The Rector of Dartington, and his supporters among your correspondents, assert that all our ideas of justice, kindliness, compassion and so on, depend ultimately on a belief in God, and are in fact Christian ideas; the implication seems to be that they are good ideas because they are Christian ideas. But the Christian Church has also, from time to time, propagated ideas by no means just, kindly or compassionate. It is no answer to say that the Church, when it did that, was not truly representing the Christian religion; it claimed the authority of religion in support of those ideas, and still does claim the authority of religion for whatever ideas it chooses to believe in at any time. The Christian religion seems such a conveniently elastic affair that one never knows from one moment to the next how it is going to be interpreted. It may be said that I confuse the Church with Christianity; but it is the Church which is claiming the right to interpret Christianity, and the right to teach children (who ought to be learning how to think clearly) to rely on the authority of dogmatic beliefs in all moral questions—the precise nature of the beliefs to be decided by the Church.

From G. Sullivan.

Does the Rector of Dartington maintain that obedience to conscience depends on our having had the right information about God in our youth? The idea seems to me to be standing on its head. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," sounds more probable than "Blessed are the theologically well-informed, for they will be pure in heart." Whether the pure in heart see God, only the pure in heart can know. But the rest of us know from experience that to be governed by self-interest means, in time, to see nothing but our own shadow. I should guess that when people obey the voice of conscience in defiance of self-interest, they are driven by a deep impulse to escape the darkness and unreality of the stuffy little world which revolves round the ego, and see things as they really are. "*Why* be compassionate? *Why* be just?" say Christians to agnostics, hoping to extract an admission that it's because, thanks to Sunday school, they know certain things about the nature of God and the universe. More probably it's because they *want* to know.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND COMMERCE

SIR,—As a citizen of Czechoslovakia I think I am not entitled to argue on such matters as the Beveridge plan. Czechoslovakia and many other Continental countries have had for thirty years and longer their Beveridge plans (at a smaller scale than the excellent English elaborate owing to our much smaller standard of living). I read about dangers to British export from the costs. Obviously our pensions scheme has not depressed our exports, contrary to the opinion of some British industrialists. Czechoslovakia conquered in this time many markets in competition with British manufacturers and became, before the occupation by Germany, the largest shoe exporter of the world. Brno and Plzen belonged to the largest armament exporters, and some specialist goods, viz. some cloth, hop, malt, beet, machines for beet sugar, obtained premium prices above the general prices.

RUDOLPH KELLER, D.Sc.

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THE BODLEY HEAD

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE code of ladyhood received its first attacks (from within) just before the last war. After the war it was generally buffeted, both from within and from without; now there are few representatives of the species still extant, and they are mostly old, living apart and—as a standard—generally unregarded. Where a lady is detected, her vulnerability is contemptuously exploited. Virtue may be its own reward, but the adage comes ill from those who flout it. What is—what was—that virtue? To be a lady meant to possess a high degree of social responsibility and a sensitiveness to *taste* in behaviour. It was primarily an aesthetic, only secondarily a moral, position: the lady did certain good things because to do them was implied by her condition, and she avoided certain others because they were (to her) obviously ugly. If she was kind it was because she was, in the nature of her case, disinterested. She was not expected to be an angel, but was continuously required to be something of an artist.

In 1881 ladies were the rule, and in drawing the portrait of one the middle-aged, cosmopolitan man of letters that was Henry James set himself to make explicit what novelists like Disraeli and Meredith took for granted, and to isolate and set in relief the specific qualities of the situation. The result is by the highest standard a most beautiful and distinguished piece of work. If, as a novel, it is not quite in the first class, the reason lies, not in any failure to realise the chief end, but rather in the relative weakness of two of the other characters. Nevertheless the standard of conduct represented by Isabel Archer will not soon be matched by any code of social behaviour we are likely to see emerge from the opening era. Indeed, to read *The Portrait of a Lady* to-day is to take the measure of the relational poverty to which modern men and women have condemned themselves.

Perhaps I can best establish this by reminding you briefly of the plot, which is, generally speaking, that of almost all James's larger fictions. A beautiful young girl, brought up in a happy, but strict, New England home, comes to England at the invitation of her aunt, the selfish but intelligent wife of a rich old Anglo-American banker. At the latter's country house Isabel receives attentions, first from her cousin, Ralph Touchett, a prematurely wise and very kind invalid who hopes for nothing but friendship from her; secondly from the local landowner, Lord Warburton, who is as good as the gold of which he disposes in so large a quantity; thirdly from an old admirer, Caspar Goodwood, a strong silent business man who has followed her from America and does not intend to be shaken off. But Isabel refuses all three. Why? Because none of them touches her imagination. The Young Girl is still in the ascendant; the Lady awaits the test of experience. This is not long in coming. While yet in England Isabel meets a friend of her aunt's, a clever, charming, accomplished, somewhat mysterious woman of the world, Madame Merle—and succumbs to the romance of charm. Later, when she accompanies her aunt to Florence, she is taken by Madame Merle to visit a friend of hers, one Gilbert Osmond, a dilettante living in distinguished poverty with a young daughter in a beautiful house full of precious objects picked up "on the cheap." Against the advice of everyone, in spite of the horrified warnings of Ralph Touchett, the more discreet approaches of Lord Warburton, and the overt attacks of Caspar Goodwood, Isabel insists upon marrying Osmond, who, primed by Madame Merle with the information that Isabel is her uncle's heiress, has alone guessed how to appeal to her imagination. Defiant, persuaded she is doing a fine thing, Isabel marries in haste and repents at gradual, dreadful leisure. She is not long in discovering that her husband is heartless, pig-selfish, a snob, and pettily cruel; but it takes her longer to realise that his low mind, which always attributes the base motive, actually hates her for being what she is—a lady. The climax is only reached when she discovers that Pansy Osmond is her husband's illegitimate child by Madame Merle, who married Isabel to her old lover for the sake of a common convenience. At this point Isabel's isolation is complete, for she has deliberately cut herself off from all those who could, and would, help her. After Ralph Touchett's death, Goodwood makes a last appeal to Isabel to leave her odious husband and return to America with him; but she refuses, preferring to lie on the bed she has made for herself.

Such is the story, which is unfolded with Victorian leisureliness but with a serpentine guile in the "placing" of events and the juxtaposition of characters. As far as the creation of living character goes, James's later elaboration of method never enabled him to do better than here. As the years went on he took mother-of-pearl opera-glasses to look at things he could already see quite clearly. The result was a fascinatingly absolute completeness of detail and a soft yet bright light beautifully diffused over the whole canvas—but at the cost of lively impact and of clear-cut dialogue. It is possible that at least once (in *The Wings of the Dove*) James treated a situation with wider and deeper implications and an even greater intrinsic pathos; he never told a more poignant story with more perception and directness.

The poignancy lies in the sweetness of Isabel's character and the brutal disillusionment to which her Bovarysme exposes it. She may have "enjoyed puzzling a lord," but she declined to marry even the nicest of them. To have chosen so much—so very much—worse would seem to argue a failure of intelligence. But this is exactly the crux of James's vision of Isabel's character, for we are told quite early in the book that her view of life reposed on a considerable self-esteem. Now innocence such as hers is made doubly vulnerable by this quality, which creates a vicious time-lag after innocence has been destroyed. So that, even when Osmond sneered most outrageously at her, "she still wished to justify herself; he had the power, in an extraordinary degree, of making her feel this need. *There was something in her imagination he could always appeal to against her judgment.*" (Italics mine.) That something was the romantic dream which such characters as Isabel never wholly relinquish.

Such dreams, however, have nothing to do with being a lady, and life would in any case have posed Isabel some problem or other involving that conception of how to behave. It was not for nothing that James was steeped in French literature, and this novel in especial rings with the sharp, clear voices of La Bruyère and La Rochefoucauld, as well as the graver tones of Corneille. For the Lady is a Cornelian conception and *The Portrait* a typically Cornelian tragedy. Yet these sacrifices have concomitant satisfactions, and Isabel rightly felt herself to be "in a better position for appreciating people than they are for appreciating you." And even in the ultimate abyss of disillusion, during her last meeting with the woman who had grossly betrayed her friendship, she enjoyed the luxury of silence, where mere words would have spelt a vulgar revenge. Such private subtleties are the reward of a Cornelian conception of duty being to embrace danger and unhappiness in the aesthetic fulfilment of personality.

"*L'esthétique est une justice supérieure*," said Flaubert. Superior or not, Henry James is a novelist who never flinches from judging his characters. Neither in this book nor elsewhere does he pretend to impartiality; we are told, in no uncertain terms, as La Rochefoucauld would have told us, what to think of his people. This, where the novelist is quite certain of his ground, may be a gain; where he is not, it merely creates prejudice. No one is likely to object to the way in which the Touchetts, Madame Merle, Henrietta Stackpole, the Warburton family, or Isabel herself are presented. Caspar Goodwood and Gilbert Osmond are less completely successful. The former, intended to seem stiff, is in effect wooden; while in Osmond, carefully and fairly as he is drawn, we are conscious of being led up the garden path of an ever so dim theatricality; which is, of course, disappointing. In fact the best portrait of Osmond is the shadow he casts on Isabel herself. Evil is contagious, and what we are permitted to see of Osmond's ill effects on his wife is among the many evidences we possess of James's sensitiveness to what Hazlitt called "the air of truth."

To quote La Rochefoucauld: "When loyalty in love does violence to our feelings, it is no better than disloyalty." This is very un-Cornelian and no lady would agree with it; yet Isabel (and here is one of the incidental beauties of this rich novel) allowed poor Ralph, on his deathbed, to perceive, though not to hear, that she loved him more than anyone, at long last. They discuss death and Ralph says: "Dear Isabel, life is better, for in life there is love. Death is good—but there's no love."

So Isabel chose life, and the love that is disclosed by the renunciation of love. There is no "full close" to this novel and the scene of Goodwood's final appeal is not among the best in the book. The last page flings open the door on to a room as empty as the heart that has just left it. We are left to imagine the years of silent resignation and gnawing doubt—for she will sometimes have doubted—that must have followed Isabel's return to Italy and her husband. Here, in this unresolved and diminishing chord, we feel some of that ineffable quality of mystery that envelops two of Balzac's finest stories—*Le Lys dans La Vallée* and *Le Curé de Village*. Mme. de Mortsauf ended by preferring death to the "love" of her impossible husband (a better man, however, than Gilbert Osmond); but Mme. Graslin, fortified by the Catholic religion and the ruthless support of the priest who knew her secret, found a better way of sticking it out. We may indulge the hope that, on her return to Italy, Isabel may have solaced her loneliness with care for the peasants around her. In any case, all these heroines have one important quality in common: they are, first and foremost, ladies, and know how not to notice the rolling eye of the Devil, even when he speaks sweetest reason.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

NEW NOVELS AND STORIES

The Renegade. By ALFRED PERLES. *Allen and Unwin.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Polonaise. By DORIS LESLIE. *Hutchinson.* 9*s.*

The Judgment of Paris. By MARGARET CARDEW. *Faber.* 6*s.*

Winter's Tales. By KAREN BLIXEN. *Putnam.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

It is rare for a work of art to spring from transplantation, whether voluntary or enforced. There has been little refugee art in recent history, and, with the notable exception of Americans in Europe, little expatriate art. The decline of the great French film directors in Hollywood has been as conspicuous as the relative infertility of the European refugees from Hitler. This is one of the, possibly minor, tragedies which compulsory emigration has caused. It is true that Italy and France have long been the second homes of English writers, but fruitful contact was never the same thing as transplantation. Scott visited Paris, but if he had lived there his influence on French literature could never have been what it was from Abbotsford. There has always been a fertile interplay of influences between England and France, but it was not expatriates who produced it.

Mr. Perles, an immigrant from Austria to Paris in the Twenties, came to this country not long before the outbreak of war. In France he had already mastered the French language sufficiently to write two novels in it; he has now achieved a further *tour de force* by producing a book in almost impeccable English. There are a number of reasons why a harsh judgment would be ungrateful. First, there is the great compliment implied in the achievement. Englishmen who know their language well are justly resentful at the contempt, and even hostility, with which it is often treated by foreigners. In this the French

are as guilty as anyone. Sitting for hours in the Cercle Militaire at Nancy, I have heard the same joke made, and loudly appreciated, all through a winter afternoon. "On écrit éléphant, et on prononce hippopotame. Quelle drôle de langue!"

Useless to suggest that Shakespeare's language cannot be entirely ugly or ridiculous—Shakespeare and Byron were isolated and heroic exceptions. So that when a foreigner who has already learned perfect French voluntarily chooses to write in English, it is hard to suppress a warm glow of gratitude. Mr. Perles's second disarming quality is his exuberant enthusiasm for England and the English. He is prepared to argue for London against Paris, for Gower Street against the Boulevard St Germain, for Indian tea against red wine. And lastly, there is an affectionate introduction by Henry Miller which gives an endearing portrait of Mr. Perles himself.

And yet this book is a failure, and a failure which is too instructive to be disregarded. In the first place there is a whole world of difference between impeccable English and almost impeccable English.

Foreign Office magnates never say "Right now"—their daughters seldom say "You sure are scared." No English people, contemplating fornication, would think "We were determined to go the whole hog."

There are a hundred other relatively subtle examples of words, and particularly of slang, whose use is at least doubtful enough to disturb an English reader. This may seem petty criticism in the face of so redoubtable a task—but the effect is important in creating a constant sense of unreality.

And these linguistic mistakes are accompanied by errors in social observation. "He lit a Rhodian and waited for the drinks to arrive" is a sentence which could only be at home in an advertisement of that rather récherché cigarette. Again "the two tarts . . . drank tea and discussed the Cup Final" would be a plum for a keen mass-observer, but is presented as typical local colour. Mr. Perles is genuinely excited by London, and at his best he can vividly impart his excitement to at least one jaded, wartime Londoner. But his excitement is aroused by such very odd subjects. It is not the Georgian Squares nor St. Paul's which fascinate him, not even the docks or the Underground or the rush hour. For particular enthusiasm he selects a crank theosophical society in Gower Street, and the parties of the Chelsea *bas-fond*. It may be significant that when the hero returns from a visit to Paris he is never out of the Select and never out of the company of American dipsomaniacs. Indeed, this book should be a warning to all who accept the current American presentation of Paris as anything but grossly misleading.

The French interlude—an erotic passage fit only for the incorruptible minds of the French-reading public—seemed ten times more vivid and imaginative than the rest. But judgment may have been affected either by the liveliness of the subject or by the fact that this reviewer's native language is not French. It is very much to be hoped that Mr. Perles's vigorous and active curiosity will find some more stimulating elements in English life.

Miss Doris Leslie is even bolder. True, she writes in her native language, but the background of her novel is not only removed from her own experience by space and time; it is infinitely removed in spirit. *Polonaise* follows the popular contemporary fashion of presenting a "romantic" life in the form of a novel. There are many reasons for condemning this practice, and I can imagine only a utilitarian one for condoning it. What differentiates these biographical romances from true biography? Simply the interpolation of imaginary events, the omission of unsuitable events, and the distortion of real events. As biography these books are worse than valueless in that many readers accept them as accurate. As novels they have no conceivable advantage over works of pure invention.

Chopin was an obvious victim, and if George Sand has already received similar treatment, that seems to be no reason for sparing her. Both have long been popular in romantic imagination, and the most sensational side of their lives is almost desperately familiar. Yet Chopin was primarily a great composer, and as a lover he was both conventional and somewhat insipid. As for George Sand, that earnest, generous and industrious woman who was admired by men as different as Dumas, de Tocqueville, Sainte-Beuve and Flaubert—as for *that* George Sand, she hardly puts in an appearance. To Miss Leslie she is a ferocious *femme fatale* who "laughs softly" and whose mouth is a "crushed fragrance."

Evocation of "period" is a feature of these romances.

> Paris in the eighteen thirties . . . . City of Enchantment and Revolt. Romantic doctrines plastered Art's Temple with a façade of distorting mirrors wherein a carnival parade of soulful-eyed young men and women bowed and postured in extravagent hyperbole . . . Alfred de Musset, a drunken young Dyonysus . . . Delacroix, that dynamic genius, using his brush like a broom; the daring and gifted Berlioz—all dedicated to the Universal Life, la vie Bohème.

Balzac, Dumas, Mme. de Girardin, Liszt—all receive their thumb-nail technicolour portraits. Why, oh why?

The Judgment of Paris should be a brilliant little gem, ironic, nostalgic, perceptive. An American lecturess, faith-healing to the English community in Paris, taken up by them, ridiculed by their native irony and charm. But, oh, *mon dieu*, the *jeu* is so *vieux*! Every joke is presented with such an empressement of delicacy that one can hardly believe it isn't funny. Yet it so seldom is! There is a fairly good limping, ex-Somme, bitter-boyish Englishmen for those who are starting a collection; experienced collectors will hardly require another duplicate.

After the King's Road parties, Hollywood's *vie de Bohème* and these past-post-Jamesian ghosts, Baroness Blixen is as cool and delicious as a sea breeze in the desert. These stories are entirely individual, with only a far-off exquisite flavour of Hans Andersen and Conrad. Can there be a Danish literary tradition to which they belong, and which is wholly unknown to us? I suspect that this is an isolated and purely personal talent. Certainly the first sensation is of unfamiliarity and freshness. Later one sees that these stories have nearly every quality which stories need. They are exceedingly well written, with an unstrained art in the selection of words and a marvellous freedom from either cliché or affectation. They are also complete in themselves, yet without the least superfluity. They are fanciful, and yet it is only rarely that fancy is threatened with whimsy. More often imagination is deliciously controlled by the writer's profound sophistication.

Nearly all the *Winter's Tales* are laid in the nineteenth century, and a large part of them in Denmark. But there is no hectic agglomeration of local colour. The stories are as timeless as myths or legends. Possibly the taste is more individual than I have suggested, but those who are pleased by Baroness Blixen's book will be extravagantly pleased. The dominant quality is too particular to be described in a brief review, and investigation is strongly recommended.

PHILIP TOYNBEE

THE POET'S MATURITY

Selected Poems. By JOHN HALL, KEITH DOUGLAS, and NORMAN NICHOLSON. *Staples.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

Forty Poems. By JOHN LEHMANN. *Hogarth.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

Twentieth-Century Psalter. By RICHARD CHURCH. *Dent.* 5*s.*

The Narrow Place. By EDWIN MUIR. *Faber.* 6*s.*

Several critics have recently declared that most modern poets are "adolescent." After reading the four volumes, containing the work of half a dozen poets, in front of me, it strikes me that the more considerable modern poets have all of them matured round about the age of fifty. The social conditions in which we live go far to explain why Rilke, Yeats, Eliot, Edith Sitwell, and now Edwin Muir, have all written their best and maturest work at an age when we are accustomed to expect poets to lose their inspiration. These four volumes illustrate very well the line of development of the modern poets.

The main practical problem which a poet has to solve in order to attain the best conditions in which to work, is a balance between isolation, creative solitude, and society (using the word in its widest sense). Too deep a plunge into "life" leads to a dissipation of the imagination, and to an invasion of the inner world of the poet by the aims of outside influences, programmes and values. Solitude is a far safer game than society for a writer, but it too has its dangers, which are apparent in the work of many minor and conceited writers.

In present-day conditions, solitude is almost impossible, not merely physically but even mentally. At the best it becomes a self-conscious cutting oneself off, which is not solitude at all, but the good child sitting in the corner at the naughty children's party. However, the social party itself presents demands of dissipation which are practically unavoidable. A really intelligent or wilful talent might steer clear of all these dangers, but that is unlikely.

These four volumes illustrate well the process of a modern poet's growth. The young write as though they were on the far side of a powerful destructive tide which they have to swim. They are, and they are not to be blamed for scanning the surface of the water for straws, as though they saw themselves drowning. Their poems are full of desperate cries of encouragement to each other, appeals to their girls for support, nausea for country scenes and childhood, dread of the future. Keith Douglas writes:—

> Once my mother was a wall;
> Behind my rampart and my keep
> in a safe and hungry house
> I lay as snug as winter mouse;
> till the wall breaks and I weep
> for simple reasons first of all.
>
> All the barriers give in,
> the world will lance at every point
> my unsteady heart, still and still
> to subjugate my tired will.
> When it's done they will anoint me
> being kinder if they win.

J. C. Hall's poems are haunted by the nightmares of the present, nightmares which have become familiar, "the crucifix of stars," quite a little crucifix, but perfectly genuine and true. His best poem, called "At a Window," is a bird's dream of flying away into the aeriel landscape. War, school, "to Alan Rook," "Love was the Worm," these are the familiar properties of his verse which would look like a stage, did we not realise that there is every reason for it, it is all literally true. Mr. Norman Nicholson seems to be one of the crabbed and wizened clever young who are able to turn everything into a mixture of sexual and religious symbolism. Formerly he would be regarded as obscene and rather blasphemous, but to-day I think the mixture of sex, sin and sanctitude means merely that one is devout. Again, this mixture is genuine, and there is something really pious about Mr. Nicholson's improper little poems. He is much the most skilful of the three in this volume.

In Mr. Lehmann's poems we see the garden of innocence, trampled over by the political bears of the Thirties, and then re-form again into the visionary poetry which is a generally shared experience in this explosive to-day. Mr. Lehmann is a genuine poet, within his limitations, and he is strikingly more successful in verse than in prose. His verse at the best has extreme clarity, an obvious but pleasant imagery, and a very pleasant, romantic music. In his early poems he can write lines as successful as:

> How often through the laggard, conscious hours,
> While dawn's grey sepals covered day's blue flowers.

In his later poems he can write movingly and with the same clear calm, legends of the war which seem to have a background of the Austrian lakes. The poems in between suffer from the

pressure of too much outside experience and apprehension of the war.

In Twentieth-Century Psalter Mr. Richard Church has attempted to do what is most worth doing to-day in poetry. That is surely to take advantage of the poetry of surrealist events which now form a background to everyone's life, and try to draw some conclusions. No task could be more enticing, nor more necessary, nor more difficult. One is tempted to say to the poets "There's poetry all round us to-day. Write it!" as people tell painters to paint a landscape which is already a picture. However, it is not as easy as that. All one can say is that Mr. Church has made a brave attempt, and that most of the result is very readable. Mr. Church's poetry is truthful, often wise, sensitive, sometimes prosy, always decent and modest. I wish very much that the B.B.C. would broadcast a lot of Twentieth-Century Psalter. It has the virtues of seriousness and humility which Pudney's rather machine-made R.A.F. poems lack. It thinks religiously about things that people are thinking about, and the expression is always simple and transparent.

In his new volume Mr. Edwin Muir achieves the maturity which is the aim of all poets. This book is as decisive an advance on his other writing as *The Tower* was over Yeats's early books. For many years now Mr. Muir has been elaborating themes on time and death. Intellectually, what he has to say, like all philosophic poetry, is the most difficult material to crystallise and keep free from abstractedness. On the face of it, Mr. Muir's gifts are not of an order which would seem to help him in his task. His imagery is somewhat stiff, being largely derived from heraldry, and his forms are somewhat arbitrary. His technique is always interesting, but it does not always strike one as inevitable.

However, he has now managed to exploit his limitations by writing a highly intellectual poetry which is expressed within a simplified pattern of images and ideas, which have grown to the stature of legends in his mind. These poems are triumphs of steady and passionate thinking on the situation of humanity, and they are some of the most serious and moving poetry of our time. Within his particular limitations I think that Mr. Muir is one of the living writers whose work will be most sought out in the future, and these poems will stand beside his remarkable and neglected autobiography, *The Story and the Fable*, which is one of the smaller masterpieces of our time. His poetry is of far greater significance than this, and perhaps in the next years it will achieve greater breadth and freedom, and something of wildness which it lacks. Meanwhile, a dozen poems in this volume are outstanding, and should be read by everyone who cares for poetry.

STEPHEN SPENDER

THE FAMILY DOCTOR OF THE FUTURE

The Future of Medicine. By DR. STARK MURRAY. Penguin Special. 9*d*.

In a recent number of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION I commented on another book by Dr. Stark Murray, called *Health for All*. Much that I said about that work applies with equal force to the present book. The author takes the family doctor as the foundation of his thesis. "The general practitioner," he writes, "is to-day and appears likely to remain the basis on which the machinery of medical care is built. Except in a few special types of service, it is the general practitioner who first sees the individual whose health is causing concern to him or his relatives." This being so, it is unfortunate that the author has no first-hand experience of general practice or of the general practitioner's life and relation with his patients. In the little biography affixed to *The Future of Medicine* we read that Dr. Murray graduated both in science and medicine because he hoped to do laboratory work and wanted a wider training in scientific methods than is given by the medical curriculum. After five years in research positions he moved to London, and is now a full-time Clinical Pathologist in the Emergency Medical Service. His career, as might be expected, reinforces his natural bias towards the impersonality of laboratory science, rather than to the humanities of ordinary medical practice.

He makes some strangely conflicting statements. Thus he writes: "A medical service is an ideal ground for the testing of new democratic ways of providing for the needs of the population"; but he violently opposes the individual patient having any choice of or control over the family doctor who attends him. As Dr. Lindsey Batten—whose claim to a hearing has been well demonstrated by his previous expressions of that rare quality, common sense—puts it in a recent letter in the *B.M.J.*: "Our patients are not always good judges of doctors or doctoring; but this can be said for them: in general they demand from us the best we can give," whilst the State, as an employer of practitioners, has, as its standard of excellence only, "that which produces no complaints." Dr. Murray would have the Government spend on the medical services £140,000,000 a year; and, could they be certain that his budgetary scheme would be adopted by the Government, many doctors with little or no previous experience of or anchorage in medical practice would be sorely tempted by this easy solution of all their problems. Although it is suggested that the number of general practitioners should be increased threefold, Dr. Murray assures them that for their easier and less responsible work under a salaried system they would each receive a larger nett income—something over £700 a year, is the sum mentioned—than the average income of the panel doctor and other general practitioners to-day.

Less controversial is that part of the book which criticises the present-day medical education of the general practitioner; though here, again, the author's lack of practical experience of the family doctor's work makes some of his criticisms less apt than others. Nearly all of us would agree that at present "the training does not relate the earlier studies of the medical course to the later needs of the doctor"; and that "too much time is spent on the acquisition of detailed knowledge while the background of general biology is completely absent." So, too, will there be practically universal agreement that "the present-day teaching of anatomy and physiology produces a divorce between a student's knowledge of function and of structure which is hardly corrected by his later curriculum." The author's further suggestion comes strangely from a doctor engaged in pathological research. "Of the greatest importance to the future of medicine," he writes, "is the need for giving every medical student a clear picture of the social background in which disease occurs." It is, of course, most desirable that the young doctor should start in practice with a real notion of how different classes live, and of the diseases that can be directly related to their several environments and habits. There are certain diseases that can generally be kept at bay by healthy living and a healthy environment; but there are plenty of other grave disorders that make short work of such defences—lobar pneumonia, for instance, diabetes and, so far as we know, cancer. What Garrod has called the inborn errors of metabolism often ripen into serious and sometimes fatal diseases on which environment and so-called healthy living have little or no influence. We know a good deal about the external factors mainly responsible for some of the commonest diseases, but as yet we know singularly little about the internal factors—that is to say, those circumstances of the individual

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physiology—that make certain people more susceptible than others to malign influences from outside. Over and over again we must all have been struck, during the prevalence of an epidemic, by the astonishing way in which, in a house or a street or a village, among those seemingly exposed to equal risks, one is taken and another left. Nor, as I have said, is there any general rule whereby the weaker are those who go to the wall.

The Future of Medicine is a less interesting book than the author's earlier *Health for All*, suggesting an uninspired rehash of ideas and theories already clearly expressed. HARRY ROBERTS

A VICTORIAN PASTICHE

The Poldero Papers. By C. E. VULLIAMY. *Michael Joseph.* 10s. 6d.

This highly agreeable book takes the form of a diary supposedly written during the years 1868-1886 by an English country gentleman. It is not only a *jeu d'esprit*, it is a critical appreciation of the Victorian scene, for Mr. Vulliamy knows and understands the period uncommonly well. A grumpy critic may object that we have so many genuine documents of the sort that a fictitious one is superfluous. There is a danger, moreover, that a comment we should necessarily accept in Augustus Hare or Lady Augusta Stanley will seem a wild caricature in the mouth of an imaginary character. But if William Polderoy's opinions are often grotesque, they are never out of keeping, and, compared with some eminent Victorians, he is reasonable. We follow with bewildered amusement the varied preoccupations of our grandfathers, who were delighted or perturbed equally by the most portentous and the most trivial innovations. Controversy raged, as this book faithfully reflects, about æstheticism, the Athanasian Creed, archery, balloons, cremation, croquet, damnation, Darwin, the Dissenters' Burial Bill, Doré, feminism, Mr. G., General Gordon, hypnotism, income tax, incense, infallibility, infernal machines, Ireland, the Salvation Army, spiritualism, tricycles, tumuli, and vivisection. Occasionally, Mr. Vulliamy may be thought, in his notes, to obtrude with no obvious necessity his personal prejudices; he can resist a dig neither at the followers of Freud nor at Kilvert's Diary, which he strangely dismisses as the maundering work of a silly curate. But his comments are usually uncontroversial and very sensible, while the quotations he appends from contemporary newspapers are well selected. The style of the diary is excellently sustained, and Mr. Vulliamy has resisted the temptation to exuberate even in such incidents as Mrs. Polderoy's elopement. At the end we are left with a very just picture of England as it might have appeared to a gentleman neither less educated nor conspicuously more intelligent than most of his sort. He is not aware, on the one hand, of the greatness of contemporary genius, or, on the other, of the hideousness and squalor in which the proletariat lived their short and savage lives. Such limitations are indeed in themselves significant and typical. Mr. Vulliamy is to be congratulated in the skill with which he has made his pastiche informative and entertaining.

R. M.

AN OLD LIBERAL

Between Two Wars. By J. A. SPENDER. *Cassell.* 8s. 6d.

The distinguished Liberal publicist who directed the *Westminster Gazette* for more than twenty-five years (can that still be called a green memory?) died last year, almost the last survivor of his group. His range in authorship was not revealed until after his release from the editorial chair, when he made a place for himself among the biographers and political historians, and produced one of the best autobiographical records of English journalism. Nothing, therefore, could have been more fitting, indeed inevitable, than that J. A. Spender should write a last volume from his own assured standpoint dealing with the tragic twenty-years interval. It was literally his farewell, for he kept at it to the end, this labour being his only anodyne in a cruel illness.

There were few among the elders more fully informed concerning British policy. Beginning with the mood of 1919-20, he deals at some length with the Chamberlain policy, noting that Baldwin's rearmament speeches in 1936 marked the hour of reversal and arguing that the only possible policy for England to pursue was that of delay and preparation. Hitler's two-years start in armament seemed to him conclusive: war before 1939 would have been fatal for Britain. Writing for a group of northern newspapers, Spender found himself in 1938-39 out of step with the Opposition, since, although firmly on the side of the Spanish Republicans, he was convinced that the Munich surrender was unavoidable. Restating his position here, he does not attack the Chamberlain technique, which, of course, had very much to do with the fierceness of world opinion against Britain; nor does he condemn the Government slackness in following out the logic of its own decisions. Not a few readers will be surprised that Spender, writing so late in the day, should give space to a full discussion of the League and what it might have done, since he recognises that the events of 1936 made an end of Geneva. He insists that the massing of the small nations had nothing to do with collective security, which was, and is, possible only through unity among the Great Powers. It is likely enough that if he had lived to revise the book, Spender would have made changes in these chapters, and he would, of course, have corrected his proofs. It is ludicrous, for instance, that an eminent editor should not have been saved from frequent repetition of a wrong year for the last general election.

He closes, as we should expect, with a personal confession. In *Life, Literature, and Politics*, Spender had avowed his faith in a cosmic order ultimately beneficent. This he reaffirms in a brief statement of mystical rationalism, implying an unshaken adherence to his political and social tenets. From the horrors of barbarism and unreason into which Europe had plunged, he was convinced that the peoples would return. When asked to read the lessons in the church of his Kentish village, Spender told the vicar that there was only one article of the creed he could accept without reserve—"I believe in the Holy Ghost": the eternal spirit of Good, which seemed to him to involve the assumption that death could not be the end for man. In our day of storm and terror, as we may know, that faith remains widespread among men and women who deem themselves wholly emancipated. S. K. R.

Napoleon at the Briars. By FAITH COMPTON MACKENZIE. *Cape.* 5s.

Mrs. Compton Mackenzie has devised a charming vignette of Napoleon on St. Helena with a schoolgirl, Betsy Balcombe—who later wrote, as Mrs. Abell, her memories of the Emperor. "Evanouissement d'une splendeur immense," Napoleon banished is a subject lending itself most readily to sardonic treatment, for the brutal stupidity of Sir Hudson Lowe was equalled by the undignified pettishness of his captive, while the jealousies of the French staff were farcical. In this little book, however, such cruel and ironical facts play small part; for Mrs. Compton Mackenzie writes with tenderness and elegance about the most amiable side of an unamiable character. With few exceptions all who knew Napoleon well came to dislike him, and with good reason, but to the little English Betsy he showed himself in an exceptionally friendly light, as an indulgent uncle whose teasing was based on affection

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and redeemed by generosity. Her father meanwhile was making exorbitant profits by importing goods for the Imperial household. But when she fell on evil days in later life—and this makes a pleasing footnote to the story—she appealed to Napoleon III for help, which he provided in the shape of a grant of land in Algeria. Mrs. Compton Mackenzie's treatment of the whole story is delightful, and provides one of the very few pictures of Napoleon that are both truthful and sympathetic.

Week-end Competitions

No. 689

Set by D. E.

Oddities in social customs, language, architecture, dress, etc. (such as the Triglyphs of Greek architecture, the Flash at the back of the collar of the Welsh Fusiliers) for which there is no apparent reason can often be traced to some long forgotten necessity. Readers are asked to imagine such oddities—the more absurd the better—in the year 2043 as could be traced back to the conditions of life imposed by the present war. Prizes to the amount of Four Guineas are offered.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, April 26th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 686

Set by K. J. Raine

The following poem by Rostand appeared in one of those anonymous letters that reach England from time to time from Occupied France. In that context, it is, I think, an interesting comment on the V-campaign from one point of view that must be deeply felt by many people living in Europe to-day. The usual prizes are offered for an English version of this poem, freely translated into the idiom of 1943:

Je ne veux pas que voir la victoire,
Ne me demandez pas " après " ;
Après, je veux bien la nuit noir,
Et le sommeil sous le cyprès.

Je n'ai plus de joie à poursuivre,
Et je n'ai plus rien à souffrir.
Vaincu, je ne pourrais pas vivre,
Et vainqueur, on pourra mourir.

Report by K. J. Raine

" The idiom of 1943 " appears to be a very mixed bag indeed. The range extends from communese—" If only we can beat the bastards flat " to Hymns A. and M.

" Ask not what throes of victory mean
Nor why for them I pine."

And from the Shakespeare Society:

" My sole desire to see that victory
That cancels all demands of subsequence."

to *vers libre*:

" I only want to see
Victory.
Do not ask
' What after that ? '
After that I long
For the dark night
And slumber ——"

The rich confusion of the English language can even produce this:

" Life holds for me no more
Of either sweet or bitter wine. I would be content
To call it a day, as though Fate said, ' Time, gentlemen, please ' and I ' *nunc dimittis*.'
Could I but see the men march home to victory
Having seen the triumph I could shut my eyes
To everything."

The large number of references to the Beveridge Plan was perhaps not surprising in a rather gloomy future-looking poem. The number of " cypress swards " and " cypress grots " surprised me more. The last two lines called forth a variety of interpretation. Charlotte Urquart's honesty compelled her to say:

" Conquered I should not dare to live " ;

but D. M. Allen, with perhaps more historic sagacity wrote:

" The vanquished have nothing to live for,
While the conqueror will surely be killed."

But I prefer the more conscientious rendering given by John Howard:

" Vanquished I have nothing to live for ;
Victor I die with less shame."

The best translations, as it happened, were the tough and virile ones. The first prize of one guinea goes to Sir Robert Witt; 10s. 6d. each to William Bliss, J. M., Yorick, A. J. A. for his Doric version " In memory of the Auld Alliance " (surely more than a memory while there are pipes and kilts in Gabes) and to Amopat whose R.A.F. idiom was more than I bargained for and certainly not to be found in any dictionary.

All a soldier can want is to win ;
I'm damned if I care what comes then.
Free funeral, tombstone thrown in,
Is the best that can happen to men.

I've lost all my likin' for strife,
And there's always the Devil to pay ;
If we're scuppered I've done with this life ;
When we've won you can tuck me away.
(SIR ROBERT WITT)

I want to win this war. I haven't time
To think about what afterwards shall be ;
But, after all this blood and sweat and grime
A peaceful churchyard mound looks good to me.

Life holds for me but one thing worth the giving,
One thing which if withheld would cost a sigh :
For if we lose, life won't be worth the living,
And, when we've won, I'm quite prepared to die.
(WILLIAM BLISS)

Get the damned war over first ;
Spare me all your " future plans " ;
Afterwards I long to slumber
In a peace that is not man's.

Laughter now is gone for ever,
Racked we can no longer cry.
Since we won't survive disaster,
Let's for God's sake win——and die.
(J. M.)

But fain am I for us tae win,
An' what comes efter, speir na me !
Efter ? Let the pit-mirk begin ;
I'll sleep aneath the kirk-yaird tree.
Nae joy, but dreary weird tae dree,
Nor suffering mair for me tae thole.
gin we're beat, Life, werena for me,
gin we win, Deith, can tak' his toll.
(A. J. A.)

I only want to win this bloody war,
And what'll happen afterwards can keep.
When this job's done I shan't want any more—
I reckon I shall have a good long sleep.

There won't be, when I've seen this damned thing through,
Very much else that matters, either way,
For, licked, I shouldn't want to live——would you ?
And, when we've won, I'll call the thing a day.
(YORICK)

Just let me see the victory for certain ;
Don't shoot me lines on " after the cessation " ;
On the cessation let me do a Burton,
And push some daisies back in circulation.

There's no fun worth the bind it is to try it ;
I'm too brassed off to take it on the chin ;
I couldn't make it, if at last we buy it,
But one could pack one's hand in if we win.
(AMOPAT)

Specialised Training

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BOYANUS School of Russian, 44 Museum St., W.C.1 (above Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd.). Summer term begins April 28th. Day and evening classes for beginners and students of all grades. *Conversational Narratives Illustrating Spoken Russian*, by S. C. Boyanus, published April 15th. Further partics. apply Sec.

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